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*And Home
Came Ted*

by
Walter Ben Hare

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T. S. Denison & Company, Publishers

154 West Randolph Street

CHICAGO

AND HOME CAME TED

America — the land we love
America — all else above
America the beloved,
America !

ø ø ø

DEDICATED TO A LOYAL FRIEND,
An American Soldier,
Somewhere in France,
JAMES ARTHUR McCREA

NOV 16 1917

And Home Came Ted

A Comedy of Mystery in Three Acts
Guaranteed Under the Pure Fun Laws

BY

WALTER BEN HARE

AUTHOR OF

"Aaron Boggs, Freshman," "Abbu San of Old Japan,"
"Civil Service," "A College Town," "A Country Boy
Scout," "The Fascinators," "Kicked Out of College,"
"Laughing Water," "Macbeth a la Mode," "Mrs.
Tubbs of Shantytown," "Parlor Matches," "A
Poor Married Man," "Rose o' My Heart,"
"A Rustic Romeo," "Savageland," "Sew-
ing for the Heathen," "A Southern Cin-
derella," "The White Christmas, and
Other Merry Christmas Plays,"
etc., etc.



CHICAGO

T. S. DENISON & COMPANY

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NOV 16 1917

AND HOME CAME TED

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS FOR SIX MEN AND SIX WOMEN

CHARACTERS.

(In the order of their appearance.)

SKEET KELLY	.....	<i>The Clerk</i>
DIANA GARWOOD	.....	<i>The Heiress</i>
MISS LOGANBERRY	.....	<i>The Spinster</i>
DOCTOR STONE	.....	<i>The Villain</i>
AUNT JUBILEE	.....	<i>The Cook</i>
MR. MAN	.....	<i>The Mystery</i>
JIM RYKER	.....	<i>The Lawyer</i>
MOLLIE MACKLIN	.....	<i>The Housekeeper</i>
MISS HENRIETTA DARBY	.....	<i>The Widow</i>
TED	.....	<i>The Groom</i>
ELSIE	.....	<i>The Bride</i>
SENATOR M'CORKLE	.....	<i>The Father</i>

SCENE: *The office and reception room of the Rip Van Winkle Inn in the Catskill Mountains.*

ACT I. An afternoon in April. What happened to Ted?

Act II. The same night. Who was the burglar?

Act III. The next morning. Who was Mr. Man?

TIME OF PLAYING—*Two and one-quarter hours.*

THE STORY OF THE PLAY.

“And Home Came Ted” is a sprightly comedy of mystery in which there is an abundance of fun without any taint of impropriety or any element of offense. The thrilling story is cleverly written and the interest of any audience is held from the begin-

ning to the end by a series of dramatic situations rising from one climax to another until the final denouement at the close of the last act.

The action of the comedy occurs at the Rip Van Winkle Inn in the Catskill Mountains and the plot has to do with a struggle for the legal possession of the property between Mollie Macklin, the plucky little housekeeper, and one Ira Stone, an unscrupulous physician, who hopes to turn the Inn into a sanitarium. Young Ted Gilmore, according to the terms of his grandfather's will, must assume the management of the property within one week after the reading of the will, or the Inn will be sold at public auction.

The first act of the play takes place on Ted's last day of grace and Mollie is in despair because he has failed to come home in time. The lawyer is ready to turn the property over to Ted, the Inn is full of guests, the unscrupulous doctor is anxiously waiting to see whether or not Ted comes home, and Mollie and Skeet Kelly, the hotel clerk, are eagerly waiting for the train. It comes, but Ted does not arrive. Finally, as a last desperate chance to save the property, Mollie and Skeet persuade a young civil engineer to impersonate the missing Ted. The plan seems to be working out well, the doctor gives up hope of turning the Inn into a sanitarium, and all is going merry as a marriage-bell when the lawyer explodes a bomb by announcing that he is personally acquainted with Ted. Mollie and Skeet, having already introduced the bogus Ted, are at their wits' ends to know what to do, when the lawyer mysteriously disappears and the engineer is formally presented as the young heir.

Complications come fast and furious in Act II, for the real Ted has been the boyhood lover of a comedy old maid and she is anxiously awaiting his return. The engineer is kept busy trying to escape from the spinster and at the same time trying to further his own heart interest in Diana Garwood, a guest at the Inn. Ted comes home and brings a bride with him, but the resourceful Mollie hides them in the basement. The plot is further complicated by a mysterious widow from Honolulu, who has a penchant for playing the ukulele and singing "Aloha Oe" to any man available. She is on the trail of Ted and intends to sue him for a breach of promise, basing her suit upon a series of letters he has written to her. She puts these letters in the hotel safe for the night and all the guests retire after an evening of dancing in the dining room. Mollie has locked up the place for the night and has just put out the lights when a noise is heard at the office window. Mollie conceals herself and a mysterious form steals into the darkened room and begins to rifle the safe. Mollie gives the alarm but the mysterious burglar escapes and with him the letters written by Ted to the lady from Honolulu.

The third act takes place on the morning after the robbery. Slowly, bit by bit, the many mysteries of the play are solved, surprise follows surprise and the dramatic situations in this act fairly teem with life and sustaining interest. A mysterious, deaf old farmer appears, the lady from Honolulu leaves but unexpectedly turns up in disguise, Ted turns out to be someone else, the robber is located, the real Ted turns up, the unscrupulous doctor is temporarily victorious but later ignominiously routed, and the

faithful little housekeeper, Mollie Macklin, finds the road to happiness. ———

LIST OF PROPERTIES.

ACT I.

Hotel desk or counter.
Keyboard with several keys.
Register (large book).
Stationery.
Curtains at window and doors.
Fur rugs.
Settle.
Two rustic tables.
Telephone.
Screen.
Rocking chair.
Several easy chairs and rustic chairs.
Blooming flowers in pots.
Safe.
Andirons and fender.
Auto horn (to be honked outside).
Sling (white bandage) for SKEET.
Red sock and knitting needles for Miss L.
Magazine for DIANA.
Ukulele for HENRIETTA.
Basket for AUNT J.
Large grip for HENRIETTA.
Four fancy lemonades on small tray.
Glass crash (outside).
Dinner chimes near hotel desk.
Locket and chain for Miss L.

ACT II.

Grips for TED.
Phonograph (off stage at L.).

Lunch on tray.

Small jewel-case containing letters for

HENRIETTA.

Candle for AUNT J.

Electric flashlight for JIM.

Lighted lamp for AUNT J.

ACT III.

Broom for AUNT J.

Glass of water for SKEET.

Pack of cards for JIM.

Dinner bell on counter for MOLLIE.

COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS.

SKEET—A slangy, good-natured boy of about 19, obviously from the East Side of New York City. Act I: Gray trousers, too tight and too short, black jersey, gaudy hose, low yellow shoes. Same costume in Acts II and III, except change for a misfit dress suit in Act II, as indicated in the text of the play. His right arm is in a sling during the entire play. He wears a cap when going to the village.

DIANA—A dashing, self-reliant, athletic girl of 20, preferably a blonde. Act I: Pale green and white outing costume. Act II: Elaborate white and silver evening dress with white cloak or lace shawl when she exits *C. D.* Act III: Pretty light colored morning dress.

MISS L.—A kittenish old maid of 43, hair gray and arranged in an exaggerated fashion. Large library spectacles throughout play. Act I: Gaudy afternoon dress, change to trailing dinner dress of bright color. Red feather in hair and red feather fan. Act III: Gaudy morning toilette.

DOCTOR—A chunky villain, aged 40, with iron

gray hair, bushy eyebrows and a down-curving mustache a la Bismarck. Act I: Afternoon suit, light overcoat, derby hat, change to dinner clothes. Act III: Same as first suit in Act I.

AUNT J.—A negro mammy. Her height and general figure should resemble Henrietta's. Old shoes, calico dress, kerchief, apron and bandana or dust cap in Act I. Change to white party dress as indicated in Act II of the text. In Act III she wears her first dress, with large ruffled dust cap. Change to auto cap, gloves, veil and long auto coat at point indicated in play.

MAN—A rather tall, good looking, athletic chap of 23. Act I: Laced boots, brown trousers, brown flannel shirt, old brown coat and felt hat. Large grip. Change to dinner clothes. In Act III, a neat morning suit.

JIM—A typical business man of 25. Act I: Neat afternoon suit, change to dinner clothes. Act II: A complete change in make-up and costume. Gray or white wig and whiskers. Old-fashioned boots. Farmer suit of gray or tan, celluloid collar, large Stetson hat, long old-fashioned overcoat, red bandana. Walk with a cane and bend over. The voice should be completely changed when he is disguised as the farmer. Much care should be given to this farmer impersonation, as the success of the play depends on the deception of the audience by this character. In the burglar scene he must make another change as the audience must not be allowed to suspect that the burglar is either JIM or the farmer.

MOLLIE—A vivacious, self-reliant, country girl of 20. Act I: Simple dark street dress, hat and gloves. Act II: Simple evening dress with white lace collar.

Act III: Similar to Act I. Note: Do *not* overdress this part. Any fairly competent actress can win the audience entirely in this character without the superficial aids of elaborate make-up or costuming.

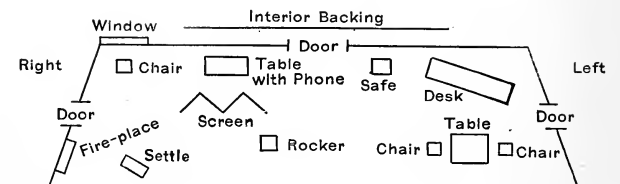
HENRIETTA—A striking brunette of 26. Act I: Long traveling coat and elaborate hat. Quick change to brilliant dinner dress cut en traine. Act III: Elaborate morning gown at first, then quick change to Jubilee's calico dress, apron and large ruffled cap. This cap should hide the face as much as possible and she should not face the audience until the climax of her scene with Ted. Therefore a blackened face is not necessary, but black gloves might add to the illusion. Change again on last entrance to long coat and hat of her first appearance.

TED—Quick in action and speech. A young man of 22. Elaborate walking suit throughout play. Neat hat, gloves, etc.

ELSIE—Nervous and very excited at all times. Neat traveling dress and coat. Lace blouse. Handsome hat. Small satchel.

SENATOR—Aged 50. Very pompous and commanding. Gray wig and mustache. Face well made up. Neat walking suit suitable to age and station. Eyeglasses and cane.

INTERIOR BACK.



STAGE DIRECTIONS.

R. means right of stage; *C.*, center; *R. C.*, right center; *L.*, left; *1 E.*, first entrance; *U. E.*, upper entrance; *R. 3 E.*, right entrance, up stage, etc.; up stage, away from footlights; down stage, near footlights. The actor is supposed to be facing the audience.

AND HOME CAME TED

THE FIRST ACT.

SCENE—*The office and reception room of the Rip Van Winkle Inn in the Catskill Mountains. There are three openings in the boxed interior set, L., R. and C. C. leads into a rear hallway with openings R. to veranda and L. to front yard. The other two openings, R. and L., are about half-way back, the R. leading upstairs (stairs may be visible if desired) and the L. leading to the dining room.*

In the upper L. corner of the stage is the hotel office desk, with mail-box, keys, register, stationery, etc. Behind this desk, and concealed from the audience, is a trap-door supposed to lead to the basement. If the trap is not easily arranged, it could be simulated by the performer, who is supposed to descend into the basement, bending his knees and gradually disappearing, finally crawling out of a concealed hole in upper L. corner.

A large fireplace, preferably of rough stone, appears at R. midway between footlights and the door R. A large window appears in upper R. corner, showing mountains beyond. This window is about two feet from the floor and must be arranged to be easy of access as several characters make quick exits through it. Tapestry curtains are draped in front of the window and over entrances R. and L. Fur rugs on the floor.

For furniture use a bark-covered rustic porch set if possible. Large settle faces fireplace. Rustic table

up R. with small chair before it and a telephone on it. This table is concealed by a three-paneled screen. Larger table down L. C. Rocking chair R. C. Several rustic chairs around the stage.

Pots of bright flowers, palms, etc., appear at convenient nooks. Stag horns and a few framed pictures on walls. Small office safe near desk. Andirons, fender, etc., in front of fireplace.

Lights on full throughout the first act. Stage well illuminated by foots and borders, as the time is mid-afternoon. Strong bunch of yellows shine through the window and C. D.

Discovered: SKEET KELLY seated back of desk up L., sound asleep with his head on the desk. His right arm is in a sling. MISS LOGANBERRY is seated in rocking-chair at R. C., knitting a red woolen sock, and DIANA GARWOOD is seated on the settle half facing the fire and half facing the audience. She is reading a magazine.

The curtain rises to orchestral music, "Farewell to Thee ("Aloha Oe"), the national song of Hawaii. Bird calls are heard and the distant clamor of cowbells.

Enter DOCTOR STONE from C. D., wearing auto cap, coat and gloves. He advances briskly to the desk.

SKEET KELLY.

(Gives a subdued snore.)

Ah, hum! *(End music.)*

DOCTOR STONE.

(Raps briskly on the desk.)

Hello, hello! Is anybody home?

SKEET.

(Awakens suddenly, rubs eyes, yawns and stretches.)

I'm home. Jest as I was goin' to fall heir to fifty million dollars and marry the lady of me choice, I gotta go and wake up.

DOCTOR.

(Sharply.)

What are you doing, running a summer hotel or a sleeping car on the C. & A.?

SKEET.

Aw, who's lettin' off all that steam? Whatcher think y' are, the twelve o'clock whistle?

DOCTOR.

I want Room 10.

SKEET.

(Pushes the register toward him.)

Go as far as y' like. It ain't nailed down.

(DOCTOR registers. DIANA comes down R. to Miss L.)

MISS LOGANBERRY.

That's the doctor from the village. His name's Stone. He's a perfect barbarian. *(Starts to rise.)* I'll introduce you.

DIANA GARWOOD.

Is he the man who treated Mollie Macklin, our little housekeeper, so shamefully?

MISS L.

(Knitting.)

Yes. They were engaged, but when he found out that old Mr. Gilmore forgot to remember her in his will—*(pauses)*.

DIANA.

(Completing the sentence with withering scorn.)

He threw her down and broke the heart of one of the finest girls that ever lived.

MISS L.

He's probably here to welcome Teddy home. I've heard that he's trying to buy the old Inn and make it over into a sanitarium. He'll probably be here for some time. You'd better let me introduce him.

(Before DIANA has time to reply, DOCTOR comes down L. C. to Miss L.)

DOCTOR.

(Pleasantly.)

Ah, Miss Loganberry, still knitting for the heathen?

MISS L.

(Sharply.)

Yes. Is there anything I can make for you?

DOCTOR.

(Not catching the fling.)

Beg pardon?

SKEET.

(Laughs.)

Ha, ha! Right on the solar plexus.

DOCTOR.

Oh, you mean that I'm a heathen? *(Laughs in a forced manner.)* That's good. Awfully clever. *(Glances at DIANA, then back to Miss L.)* Well, if you want to make something for me, you might make an introduction. *(Smiles at DIANA.)*

DIANA.

(Turns her back to him, walks to rear, then to desk.)

Oh, Skeet, would you mind telling me the correct time? My watch has stopped. *(She converses with SKEET in pantomime.)*

DOCTOR.

(After a slight pause.)

Hm! Well, what do you know about that? Who is the high and mighty princess, anyhow?

MISS L.

I suppose you are referring to Miss Garwood.

DOCTOR.

(*Surprised.*)

Not Diana Garwood?

MISS L.

(*Pointedly.*)

Miss Diana Garwood.

DOCTOR.

What's she doing here? Going to donate a couple of million to the Rip Van Winkle Inn? Well, it needs it. If the new boss doesn't show up tonight it'll be up at auction in the morning. I'll have to make her acquaintance. (*Turns up L. toward SKEET.*) Boy! (*Pause, then louder.*) Boy! (*SKEET pays no attention to him.*) Front!

SKEET.

(*Calmly.*)

The boy ain't here. He's off on a summer cruise in the Holy Land. You'll find your room up one flight, second door to the left. (*Talks in pantomime to DIANA.*)

DOCTOR.

That's the usual accommodation one gets in this hole. (*Crosses to R. E.*) You'll find a traveling bag in my car. Bring it up to my room, and don't be all day about it. (*Exits R., banging door.*)

MISS L.

(*Rising.*)

Ugh! I can't tolerate that man. Just as soon as Ted comes home I hope he'll send him about his business. The last time he was here my Gertrude took a terrible dislike to him. (*Crossing to R. E.*) They simply couldn't get along together at all, and every one knows that Gertrude has the disposition of an

angel. He saw her in the hall one day and deliberately stepped on her tail. She bit him in the vestibule and they haven't been on friendly terms since. (*Exit R.*)

SKEET.

(*Comes down L. from behind desk.*)

Did you hear what that fish called me? Boy! I'd like to put a head on him.

DIANA.

(*Comes down R. C.*)

I wonder what he's here for. I should think he'd be ashamed to look honest Mollie Macklin in the face.

SKEET.

(*Comes down to her, L.*)

Why?

DIANA.

Didn't you know? He was the man Mollie was engaged to.

SKEET.

I never knew she was engaged to any man.

DIANA.

It was broken off. He expected old Mr. Gilmore to leave her a fortune, because she had worked for him for fifteen years, but when he found out that she wasn't mentioned in the will, he broke the engagement.

SKEET.

(*After a pause looks at right arm.*)

And me with me right mitt in a sling. I gotta notion to beat him up anyway. So he t'rowed her down, did he? The rat! I'd like to hammer him to a jelly and then fling him at her feet.

DIANA.

It was a lucky escape for Mollie. She's too good a girl to throw herself away on such a cad. She's a girl in a million.

SKEET.

(Grasps her right hand with his left and shakes it.)

Thank y', miss. Thank y' for them words.

DIANA.

(Surprised.)

Why, Skeet, what is it?

SKEET.

(Bashfully twists his left foot around and looks at it, grinning.)

Hm?

DIANA.

What's the matter with you?

SKEET.

I dunno what it is. I'm jes' like the liberty bell, I guess—cracked clean across.

DIANA.

You're not in love with Mollie, are you? *(Pause.)*
Are you, Skeet?

SKEET.

I dunno what y' call it, but every time she looks at me, gee! I feel jes' like a mule kicked in the left side a' me chest.

DIANA.

How did you happen to come up here to work, Skeet? You're from the city, aren't you?

SKEET.

Sure. I come up here with a tunnel gang, but I had a accident over on the hill and Miss Mollie gave me a job here when the Inn opened Monday.

DIANA.

What kind of an accident?

SKEET.

We had a cave-in at the end of the tunnel, and I caved in with it. I fell about twenty feet; but that

wasn't the worst. You see the men in the tunnel was blasting and I fell right alongside of a lighted fuse.

DIANA.

(*Alarmed.*)

Skeet!

SKEET.

(*Seriously.*)

Y' see I was workin' up above with the boss when all of a sudden the top caved in and I landed twenty feet below with me arm twisted under like that. (*Illustrates with left arm.*) I was stunned by the fall, but I could smell the smoke of the burning fuse. The charge of dynamite wasn't more'n two feet from m' face. Gee, miss, I shut m' eyes and tried to think, but I couldn't think. I tried to shout, but the words wouldn't come—and all the time the fuse was burnin' closer and closer to the keg. I heard someone holler high overhead and then the boss slid down on a rope, facing death every second of the time. He grabbed me and they pulled us up. He was just in time. A minute later the charge exploded and blew out the whole end of the tunnel.

DIANA.

(*Enthusiastically.*)

Oh, Skeet, it was grand. He was a hero. He saved your life at the risk of his own. I never heard of anything so noble.

SKEET.

There ain't nothin' I wouldn't do fer him, miss. Why, I'd cut off my right arm this minute if the boss wanted me to.

Enter AUNT JUBILEE from L.

AUNT JUBILEE.

(*At L.*)

'Scuse me, Mistah Skeet, but is any ob you-all done seen Miss Mollie?

SKEET.

She grabbed the little tin-lizzie by the horns, give it a kick and pushed the button. Honk! Honk! Down at the station.

AUNT J.

(*Puzzled.*)

Grabbed Lizzie who?

SKEET.

(*At L. C.*)

The joy wagon, the gasoline cart, the baby rattler, the coal-hod on wheels, the two-by-four! Get me?

AUNT J.

Two-by-four? Boy, what kinda talk you talkin' to me?

SKEET.

Gee, I gotta talk kindergarten to you. She took the automobile and drove it over to the station to meet the five o'clock train.

AUNT J.

I'm habin' a little trouble wif dat ole range in d' kitchin. It don't draw and it's smokin' sumpin' spasmodic.

SKEET.

What's the matter with it?

AUNT J.

'Deed and I dunno whether it's de disintegrity ob d' stove-pipe, or if d' flue done got supercruscated.

SKEET.

Stir yer talk, auntie; stir yer talk; it's gettin' lumpy.

AUNT J.

If I's gotta talk kindergarten to you, den d' range is smokin'.

SKEET.

No smokin' allowed in the kitchen. I'll go out and see what the trouble is. I'm the original little range-fixer from Hoboken. (*Dramatically.*) Fair daughter of the desert, I will lead the way, and fix the range before another day. (*Stalks out at L.*)

AUNT J.

(*Looks after him, pauses.*)

Dat boy's gettin' too familiaritous with me, and he's gotta stop it. 'Kase if he don't I'm gwine to bust him on de head wif a flat-iron. (*Exit L., muttering to herself.*)

MR. MAN *appears at C. D. from R. He comes down L. C. and looks at DIANA, who is seated R. C. absorbed in thought.*

MR. MAN.

Excuse me, is Skeet Kelly anywhere around?

DIANA.

(*Who started at the sound of his voice.*)

Oh, how you startled me.

MAN.

(*Smiles.*)

I'm sorry.

DIANA.

I'm nervous this afternoon. I just heard a story that affected me very much. It happened over there at the new tunnel. Have you seen it?

MAN.

Yes. I helped dig it.

DIANA.

There was an accident, a cave-in. Is that right?

MAN.

(*Smiles.*)

It isn't right, but it happens occasionally.

DIANA.

Skeet fell down into the tunnel right near a keg of dynamite, and the manager went down and rescued him, facing death at every second. Wasn't that glorious? He must be a man among men. (*Pause, she looks at him.*) Isn't he?

MAN.

Well—er—(*hesitates*) he's a man, all right.

DIANA.

You don't seem very enthusiastic. I think it was wonderful. I call him a hero, don't you?

MAN.

I've heard him called worse things than that.

DIANA.

Such nerve, such presence of mind, such strength. He went down there all alone and brought Skeet up to safety.

MAN.

Yes, I know about it.

DIANA.

Do you know him?

MAN.

Yes.

DIANA.

Intimately?

MAN.

Rather intimately.

DIANA.

I wonder if you'd take a message to him. A message from me.

MAN.

A message?

DIANA.

Yes. Tell him that a girl whom he doesn't know and who he probably never will meet thinks that his

action is worthy of a Carnegie medal. Tell him I think he is a man among men and that I am proud to belong to a country that breeds such men. (*Pause.*) You'll tell him, won't you?

MAN.

(*Looking at her earnestly, much impressed, speaks slowly.*)

Yes, I'll tell him. DIANA.

Thank you. I think Skeet is in the kitchen. I'll find him for you. (*Exits L.*)

MAN.

(*Looks after her, pauses, slowly smiles.*)

Proud to belong to a country that breeds such men. (*Throws his shoulders back.*) Yes, I'll tell him. (*Crosses to door L., looking out after DIANA.*)

Enter JIM RYKER from R. He goes to the desk and looks at the register.

JIM RYKER.

I wonder if Ted got in on the evening train. (*Comes down C.*)

MAN.

(*Comes to L. C., recognizes JIM.*)

Jim Ryker! JIM.

Well, by George! (*They shake hands heartily.*)

MAN.

Are you alive? JIM.

Quite. MAN.

But I heard you had been drowned in Honolulu.

JIM.

Yes, that's what everybody heard. In Honolulu they still believe it is true.

MAN.

Is your wife with you?

JIM.

(Glances around L. and R., comes close to MAN and speaks confidentially.)

Not my wife, my widow.

MAN.

Widow?

JIM.

That's the reason I was drowned.

MAN.

I don't understand.

JIM.

(Earnestly.)

Old man, take a little tip from me. Don't ever marry a Honolulu widow. I stood it as long as I could, three months, to be exact, and then one dark and stormy night I (*careless gesture with both hands*) mysteriously disappeared.

MAN.

Then it was all a fake?

JIM.

It was the only way I could get rid of her. You know these widows; they hang on like grim death. There was no chance for a divorce. She wouldn't think of a separation, so I just got drowned. That was the easiest way out. One night I went in swimming and the next morning they found my clothes on the beach. In the meantime I caught a vessel and returned to the States at once.

MAN.

Why were you so anxious to get rid of her?

JIM.

She was too affectionate. Every night she used to get her little ukulele and sing (*sings*) "Farewell

to thee, farewell to thee." That's what gave me the idea. I thought I'd give her something to sing farewell about.

MAN.

Maybe she'll follow you over here.

JIM.

Oh, no. She'll never learn that I'm alive. She's probably singing "Farewell to Thee" to somebody else now.

MAN.

I should think she would have been suspicious when the body didn't turn up.

JIM.

Not at all. She thinks that I furnished the salad course for the meal of an avaricious but well meaning shark.

MAN.

Are you going back to her?

JIM.

Back to her? After all the trouble I've taken to provide her with widow's weeds and black crepe? I should say not. Half the world is between us and that's the way I want it to be. I'm here in the Catskill Mountains and she is probably singing "Farewell to Thee" to some other poor sucker in the moonlight on the shore at Waikiki (*pronounced Wah-ka-kee'*).

MAN.

I'm awfully glad to see you, old man. I suppose you're making a big success as a lawyer?

JIM.

Oh, I manage to keep the wolf from the door. But what are you doing dressed up like that?

MAN.

I'm an engineer.

JIM.

A civil engineer?

MAN.

Well, I'm not as civil as I might be. The governor wanted me to begin at the bottom of the ladder, so he sent me up here with a gang of men to tunnel a hole through the mountain.

JIM.

How do you like it?

MAN.

Not bad. We finished the job this morning, so now I'm free to do what I like. I think I'll stay here at the Inn for awhile.

JIM.

That's right. It's a fine old place.

MAN.

There are several attractions for me here.

JIM.

Attractions?

MAN.

I mean the mountain air and other considerations.

JIM.

The other considerations consist of an old maid, a negro cook, a housekeeper and Miss Diana Garwood.

MAN.

Diana Garwood! So that was Diana Garwood.

JIM.

Yes. Don't you know her?

MAN.

No, I never saw her before today. I've been knocking about the West ever since college. And then her family and my family are not exactly (*hesitates*).

JIM.

She's Senator M'Corkle's niece.

MAN.

Yes, I know, and the Senator and my governor

haven't been looking at each other for twenty years. They fell out over a law suit years ago and never have fallen in again. JIM.

Miss Garwood is a wonderful girl.

MAN.

(*Slowly.*)

She is—a wonderful girl.

JIM.

But cold as an iceberg. She won't have anything to do with men. MAN.

Perhaps she hasn't met *the* man yet.

JIM.

I think with her fortune that *the* man in her case would probably be an Italian prince or an English duke.

MAN.

Not much chance for a civil engineer, is there? Especially if he's not very civil.

JIM.

Say, you've got it bad. Come up to my room and have a Mamie Taylor.

MAN.

I thought this was a temperance hotel.

JIM.

(*Laughs.*)

It is. They serve their Mamie Taylors in tea cups.

Enter SKEET from L.

SKEET.

(*At L.*)

The boss! (*Shakes hands at C. with MAN.*) Gee, I'm glad to see you. How's everything over at the tunnel?

MAN.

Finished the job this morning. The men are leaving tonight. Do you want to go back to New York?

SKEET.

I should say not. I'm perfectly satisfied with the mountains.

MAN.

You're the clerk here, aren't you, Skeet?

SKEET.

(Swells up.)

D' sekketery. That's me. I'm th' sekketery.

MAN.

I suppose you have a room for me?

SKEET.

Sure, we have. You kin have the whole house if you want it. I'll give you the bridal chamber. *(Goes to R.)* It's up this way. Here, let me carry yer grip.

Enter AUNT J. from L. with basket.

AUNT J.

Mistah Skeet!

SKEET.

Yeh. I got you. *(Crosses to her.)* What can I do for you now, my little mahogany mermaid?

AUNT J.

Please, sah, kin you git me a basketful o' 'taters from down in de basement. De perpendicularity ob dem basement steps is kinder exasperatin' to d' roundity ob mah latitude.

SKEET.

Just a minute, Juliet, until I show this gent to his room.

JIM.

Never mind, Skeet. Give me the key. I'll show him up. Come on. *(Exit R.)*

MAN.

Skeet, if you go down in the basement, look out for the rotundity of your latitude. (*Laughs and exits R.*)

SKEET.

Gimme the basket. (*Takes it, goes behind counter and goes down through the trap. See note at the beginning of act.*)

AUNT J.

He's a man, he is, and he ain't afraid to go down in dat basement in de dark. But I's done heerd noises and rattles and groans down in dat basement, and dis yere cullud lady ain't gwine to trust herself among spooks.

Enter Miss L. from R., wearing trailing dinner dress.

MISS L.

Has he come yet, Aunt Jubilee?

AUNT J.

No'm, not yet. Dem 'taters is way in de back part ob de basement.

MISS L.

I mean Ted.

AUNT J.

No'm, I don't reckon he's come, neither. Miss Mollie done drove over in de tin-lizzie two-by-four to meet him at de depot.

MISS L.

Oh, I'm so impatient. How do I look, Aunt Jubilee? How do you like my new dinner costume? (*Revolves slowly.*)

AUNT J.

Mighty perpendicular, mighty perpendicular. Dat cert'n'y am a lovely cos-toom.

MISS L.

I put it on for him. He hasn't seen me for over seven years, but he'll remember, he'll remember.

SKEET *comes up from trap with basket.*

SKEET.

(*Handing basket to AUNT J.*)

There, my little Killarney shamrock, there's the spuds.

AUNT J.

Don't you git so pestiferous wif me, boy, 'kase if you do, I'm liable to exasperate you.

SKEET.

Back to the kitchen, Tessie Bell, you talk like a load of hay.

AUNT J.

I might be a load ob hay, boy, but I cert'n'y ain' gwine to be took in by no young rake like you.
(*Tosses head airily and exits L.*)

MISS L.

(*At R.*)

Skeet, is the afternoon train on time?

SKEET.

Yes'm, it's been in twenty minutes.

MISS L.

Oh, I wonder if anything could have happened to Teddy. Hadn't you better go over to the station and see?

SKEET.

Maybe Miss Mollie had a puncture.

MISS L.

(*Blankly.*)

A puncture? Miss Mollie?

SKEET.

I mean the car. Maybe the car had a puncture.

MISS L.

Skeet, I want you to do me a favor.

SKEET.

What is it?

Miss L.

As soon as young Mr. Ted arrives I want you to take him aside and tell him, just casually you know, that I am here.

SKEET.

Tell him you're here. I got y'. Anything else?

Miss L.

Yes. (*Comes closer to him, takes his arm and speaks in a half whisper.*) Yes; tell him I still have it here. (*Places hand over her heart.*) Right next to my heart.

SKEET.

I dunno what it is, but I'll bet a dollar that's the safest place on earth.

(*Honk of auto horn heard outside C.*)

Miss L.

Here comes the housekeeper now and he is with her. Oh, I'm so nervous.

MOLLIE MACKLIN.

(*Outside C.*)

Skeet!

SKEET.

Yes'm. (*Exits C. D. to R.*)

Miss L.

I can't meet him. Be still, my little fluttering heart, be still. I think I had better go to my room and compose myself. (*Exit R.*)

MOLLIE MACKLIN *appears at C. D. She speaks over her shoulder and comes down L.*

MOLLIE.

Come in and make yourself at home.

MISS HENRIETTA DARBY *enters C. D., followed by SKEET, carrying large grip.*

HENRIETTA DARBY.

(*Near desk.*)

Thank you.

MOLLIE.

Skeet, take the lady's grip to Parlor B.

SKEET.

(*At rear C.*)

I see, B.

MOLLIE.

Not I, C, B, just letter B.

SKEET.

Let 'er be! Gee, I ain't even smiled at her yet.

(*HENRIETTA registers.*)

MOLLIE.

Skeet, have you heard anything of Ted Gilmore?

SKEET.

Not a word. I thought he was coming with you.

MOLLIE.

So did I. And that's the last train tonight. Oh, just wait till I lay hands on that boy, that's all. He makes me so mad. (*Has removed her hat and jabs it with hatpins viciously as she speaks.*)

SKEET.

(*A little closer to her.*)

The doctor's here.

MOLLIE.

What doctor? Stone?

SKEET.

Yes. He's a fresh fish, ain't he? I put him in Room 10.

MOLLIE.

(*Fiercely.*)

I'd like to put him behind the bars for life.

HENRIETTA.

(*Comes down R., looking around.*)

What a pretty place.

MOLLIE.

(Goes back of desk, removes coat, gloves, etc.)

Yes, it is.

HENRIETTA.

I believe I'll go up to my room.

MOLLIE.

(Takes key from rack and gives it to SKEET.)

Skeet, show Miss Darby up.

HENRIETTA.

Thank you.

SKEET.

(Crosses to door R. with funny walk.)

Walk this way. HENRIETTA.

(Laughs.)

Walk that way? I couldn't if I tried.

SKEET.

(To audience.)

Gee, she's a live one, all right, all right. I guess this job of hotel clerk's goin' to be worth the money, even if I don't git a cent.

HENRIETTA.

What is the rate for Parlor B?

MOLLIE.

Five dollars a day.

HENRIETTA.

Isn't that a little high?

SKEET.

(At door R.)

We have to be high. It's a high mountain.

HENRIETTA.

(Down to him a little.)

It must be awfully cold up here in the winter. Don't you find it so?

SKEET.

Who? Me? No'm, not at all. I live right on top of the range, the mountain range.

HENRIETTA.

(*Laughs.*)

I believe you and I are going to be real good friends.

SKEET.

I'm always friends with every pretty girl I meet.

HENRIETTA.

(*Laughs.*)

Girl! Now I'm sure we'll be friends, Mr. Skeet.

SKEET.

Aw, tie a can on that mister stuff. To me friends I'm just plain Skeet.

MOLLIE.

We serve dinner in about forty-five minutes. You'd better get a gait on, Skeet.

SKEET.

Jellix, I'll bet a doughnut. This way, Miss.
(*Exit R.*)

HENRIETTA.

Do we have to dress for dinner?

MOLLIE.

We generally do.

HENRIETTA.

Are there any men here?

MOLLIE.

Yes, there's one so far. And a Doctor Stone.

HENRIETTA.

The doctor evidently is not a very close friend.

MOLLIE.

Close? Take it from me, he's the closest man you ever saw.

HENRIETTA.

How far is Minerva Seminary from here?

MOLLIE.

Just eight miles down the mountain.

HENRIETTA.

I must visit it. It's quite an aristocratic seminary for young ladies, isn't it?

MOLLIE.

Yes. It's a finishing school. It teaches them how to finish people who aren't their equals in society.

HENRIETTA.

Well, if dinner is to be at six, I'll have to hurry.
(*Exits R.*)

Soft music in orchestra, "Farewell to Thee" ("Aloha Oe"). MOLLIE sighs, slowly crosses over to fireplace and looks in the fire pensively. She sighs again. Enter DOCTOR from R. in dinner clothes. He starts to exit C. and then sees MOLLIE who has her back toward him. He removes his hat and comes toward her with extended hand.

DOCTOR.

Ah, Mollie. (MOLLIE starts a little, straightens up and turns toward him, looking down.) I see you're back again. It's been some time since I saw you. (She slowly raises her eyes until they meet his, she gazes at him steadily, sadly. There is a pause. He turns away slightly). I don't bear you any hard feelings, Mollie. In fact there isn't any reason on earth why we shouldn't be friends. (She turns her head away, but is silent.) Of course things didn't turn out as I expected.

MOLLIE.

(*Bitterly.*)

No, I wasn't mentioned in the will.

DOCTOR.
(*At R. C.*)

We'd never have been happy together as man and wife, struggling along on a miserable pittance. I'm a poor man, Mollie.

MOLLIE.

(*With a double meaning.*)

Yes, you *are* a poor man.

DOCTOR.

(*Takes a step toward her.*)

Can't we be friends?

MOLLIE.

No.

DOCTOR.

I'm sorry if I have offended you.

MOLLIE.

(*Interrupting sadly.*)

Sorry? No, you're not sorry. The only thing you regret is that I wasn't named in Mr. Gilmore's will. You cared nothing for me. You never cared for me, all you thought about was the old gentleman's money. Sorry! You don't know the meaning of the word.

Enter SKEET from C. D. He goes back of desk unobserved.

DOCTOR.

I only acted for the best.

MOLLIE.

(*Bitterly.*)

Yes, you acted. It was all acting from the very beginning. I thought you cared. I was a fool. Your every look, your every action, your every word was—a—lie! (*End music.*)

DOCTOR.

Well, I'm not here to argue with you. It's no use to bandy words with a woman. They're all pretty playthings, but they won't listen to reason.

MOLLIE.

(Bitterly, but sadly.)

Yes, pretty playthings to amuse you for an hour, and then to be tossed aside like a broken toy, with never a glance, never a word of kindness, never a thought of a woman's breaking heart. *(Turns, leans on fireplace and sobs.)*

DOCTOR.

(Turns up to C. D., turning to R. away from

SKEET.)

Well, if you won't listen to me—

MOLLIE.

(Faces him, speaking loudly.)

Listen to you? I *did* listen to you! I trusted you and believed in you—and now! *(Turns away sobbing.)*

DOCTOR.

You'll feel better in the morning, Mollie. You're nervous tonight. I'll stroll out in the garden and keep a lookout for the coming heir. This is his last night of grace. If Ted Gilmore isn't here to assume charge of this place by midnight, it will be sold at public auction in the morning. The last train's in, but the young man evidently doesn't care a hang what becomes of the old place. Too bad, too bad. *(Strolls out C. D. and off R.)*

MOLLIE sobs softly with her face on mantel. SKEET comes to R. C.

SKEET.

(Sympathetically.)

What's the matter, Mollie?

MOLLIE.

(*Looks up, tearfully.*)

N-othing.

SKEET.

Did that guy say anything to you, Mollie?

MOLLIE.

No, it isn't that.

SKEET.

Are you still worrying about him? (*Pause.*) Ain't there something I can do? You're all alone, Mollie, and something's bothering you. Let me help you. I know I ain't much but, gee, I'd do anything in the world fer you.

MOLLIE.

You can't help me, Skeet. There isn't any help. This is the end, I guess. There's only one thing left for me to do, to go away.

SKEET.

Go away?

MOLLIE.

Yes, I want to see new places, new faces. I want to go where I'll meet new people, people who won't pity me, people who'll allow me to live in peace and forget my troubles. .

SKEET.

Gee, do you care for him as much as that?

MOLLIE.

Care for him? For Ira Stone? I hate him! I don't give him a thought. It isn't that, it's something else. (*Crosses to L.*)

SKEET.

(*Goes to L. C.*)

And ain't there nothin' I can do?

MOLLIE.

No. There's nothing anyone can do, except Ted Gilmore.

SKEET.

What's he got to do with it?

MOLLIE.

He's got to be here tonight to take charge of the Inn. He wrote last week from New York saying he'd be here without fail today, and now the last train is in and it's too late.

SKEET.

Why does he have to be here tonight?

MOLLIE.

In order to save the old Inn from being sold at auction tomorrow. Oh, I couldn't stand it if that would happen. That's why I want to go away.

SKEET.

Don't the Inn belong to Mr. Ted?

MOLLIE.

It does on one condition. His grandfather left him all his property on condition that he should assume charge of the place within one week after the reading of the will. The old gentleman was as good as a father to me for fifteen years. The day before he died he called me to him and said, "Mollie, I'm leaving everything to my grandson Teddy. I haven't seen him in seven years and folks say he's pretty wild, but I've made certain conditions in my will that'll settle him down, and I want you to stand by him, Mollie, stand by him and stand by the old place!" I gave him my promise and I meant to do it, but now— (*Puts handkerchief to eyes and sobs softly.*)

SKEET.

Maybe he'll turn up yet.

MOLLIE.

No, it's too late. The lawyer is here waiting and

Doctor Stone is all ready for the auction tomorrow. He's going to bid it in for a Liquor Cure.

SKEET.

Well, suppose Mr. Ted does come, what'll he have to do?

MOLLIE.

Just let the lawyer see him and take charge of everything. He's got to run the Inn for a season and prove to Mr. Ryker, the lawyer, that he can make a success of it. If he does, the whole property and all the old gentleman's money will be his for keeps.

SKEET.

I wonder what could 'a' happened to him.

MOLLIE.

I wish I knew. Mr. Ryker wrote to him and told him the conditions of the will and he promised to be here on time.

SKEET.

Maybe he's got lost in the shuffle.

MOLLIE.

If he has then Doctor Stone wins and I leave for the city in the morning.

SKEET.

Gee! We can't allow nothin' like that to happen.

MOLLIE.

There's nothing else for me to do.

SKEET.

Couldn't we kidnap the lawyer?

MOLLIE.

No, he's upstairs waiting for Ted to come home. (*Looks at watch.*) It's only six hours to midnight and I can't do a thing. I've just got to sit down and see the old place go to ruin before my very eyes.

Enter Miss E. from R.

MISS L.

(*At R.*)

Oh, Mollie, I'm so excited. I've seen him. I was peeping out of the door of my room and he went down the hall.

MOLLIE.

(*At L.*)

He—who?

MISS L.

(*At L. C.*)

Why, Ted, of course.

MOLLIE.

Honest?

MISS L.

I don't know whether he is or not and I don't care. He's the dearest boy on earth. Tell me, do I look pale?

MOLLIE.

(*Comes to her.*)

Not very. Where did he go?

MISS L.

He was with Skeet.

SKEET.

(*At L.*)

With me?

MISS L.

Oh, Mollie, do you think he'll know me? Do you think I've changed much in the past seven years?

MOLLIE.

(*Hesitates.*)

Well, you've changed a little.

MISS L.

He was only fourteen then, and I was his teacher. He gave me his picture and said that he'd never forget me. And now he's coming back. I've been waiting for this night for the past seven years.

MOLLIE.

That's an awful long wait.

MISS L.

(*At R.*)

He will remember. I'm afraid I'm too pale. I wonder if I shouldn't put a little more color in my cheeks. (*At door R.*) I'll do it. Oh, I'm so excited. (*Bustles out at R.*)

MOLLIE.

(*Turning to SKEET.*)

What did she mean, Skeet? Is he really here?

SKEET.

Naw, she dunno what she's talking about.

MOLLIE.

(*Down C.*)

She said he was with you.

SKEET.

That wasn't him. That was me boss over at the tunnel. The man who pulled me out. (*Goes up C.*)

MOLLIE.

(*Down L.*)

Then it's all over. It's—all—over!

Enter MAN from R. wearing dinner clothes. He crosses to SKEET, not seeing MOLLIE who is down L.

MAN.

Say, Skeet, when do we eat?

SKEET.

(*Comes down a little L. C.*)

This is him.

MOLLIE.

(*At L.*)

Oh, how much he looks like Ted.

MAN.

(*At R. C.*)

I beg pardon?

MOLLIE.

A little taller and heavier maybe. I have his picture up in my room. He sent it to his grandfather two years ago.

SKEET.

Maybe the boss could help us out'n our troubles.

MOLLIE.

Oh, if he only could! Ted will surely be home tomorrow, but somebody must see the lawyer tonight. If we can put that over both the lawyer and Stone will leave on the morning train and Ted will come in at noon and no one would be any the wiser.

MAN.

(*Puzzled.*)

I don't believe I catch the meaning of your drift.

SKEET.

(*Comes down between them.*)

Y' see, it's like this. Miss Mollie here is up agin it fer fair. She's a girl in a million. There's a young feller who's got to show up tonight to take charge of the shooting-gallery. MAN.

The shooting-gallery?

SKEET.

I mean the Inn. He's gotta be here tonight, 'cause if he don't it's over the hills to the poor-house for us. Get me?

MAN.

Well, not quite.

SKEET.

There's a lawyer guy here to turn the place over to the young feller. And it's got to be did tonight.

MAN.

Now I'm beginning to understand.

SKEET.

'Cause if it ain't, there's a doctor fish here who did us dirt. They're tryin' to snatch the Inn away from Miss Mollie and turn it into a Liquor Cure.

MOLLIE.

If young Mr. Gilmore doesn't take charge tonight the place will be sold at auction tomorrow.

SKEET.

Now what she wants is fer you to pertend that you're the guy. See?

MAN.

I think I do. She wants me to pretend that I am young Mr. Gilmore. Is that it?

SKEET.

Fine. You got a wonderful head fer facts.

MAN.

But isn't there anyone around here who is acquainted with the young man?

MOLLIE.

Nobody but Miss Loganberry.

SKEET.

Then it's all off. That old lady's got as many eyes as a potato.

MOLLIE.

And just about as much sense. And besides she hasn't seen Ted for seven years and she's under the impression that you are him anyway. Leave her to me.

MAN.

Don't any of the other guests know him?

MOLLIE.

No. (*Goes to MAN.*) I could take you to the lawyer's room tonight with the lights turned low and all you have to do is to let him see you, and shake hands with you.

SKEET.

And in the meantime I'll present him with six or seven Mamie Taylors with the compliments of the house.

MOLLIE.

(*Earnestly to MAN.*)

You won't need to mingle much with the guests and the lawyer and Doctor Stone will leave on the morning train. I look for Ted in on the noon train. He wrote and said he'd be here sure but he must have missed connections. Will you do it, sir? Will you help us out? Oh, you don't know how much this means to me.

SKEET.

(*Comes down to MAN'S R.*)

It means a lot to me, too.

MAN.

I've got a big notion to do it. It will give me a chance to meet the guests, won't it?

MOLLIE.

Certainly.

MAN.

Then you can count me in. Ring all the bells and kill the fatted calf, the prodigal's come home.

MOLLIE.

But do you think we can put it over on the lawyer, Skeet? He's an awful smart man.

SKEET.

Don't worry about him. After he tackles my Mamie Taylors he won't know his own grandmother.

MOLLIE.

I'll go upstairs and try to persuade Miss Loganberry to stay in her room.

SKEET.

I've got it! I'll feed her little dog Gertrude a Mamie Taylor and that'll keep the old lady busy from now till midnight. (*Exit L.*)

MOLLIE.

You certainly have taken a load off of my mind, sir. I want you to know how grateful I am.

MAN.

Oh, that's all right.

*Enter HENRIETTA from R. in brilliant dinner dress.
She carries a ukulele.*

HENRIETTA.

Am I too early? MOLLIE.

Not at all. Miss Darby, let me present Mr. Gilmore. (*To HENRIETTA.*) Mr. Gilmore is the new proprietor.

HENRIETTA.

Then I'm sure I didn't make a mistake in selecting the Rip Van Winkle Inn. The scenery around here is wonderful. It reminds me of Honolulu.

MOLLIE.

(*Pointing up L.*)

You can see clear down in the valley from that veranda.

HENRIETTA.

How wonderful. (*To MAN.*) Will you show me the view? It's part of the attraction of the Inn, isn't it?

MAN.

Delighted. (*Offers his arm and they stroll out C. D. and off L.*) MOLLIE.

I didn't think we could put it over, but we have and now Doctor Stone can whistle for his Liquor Cure.

Enter SKEET from L. carrying four fancy lemonades with mint, cherries, straws, etc., on tray.

SKEET.

I caught little Gertrude in the entry and fed her a couple o' Mamie Taylors with a teaspoon. Take it

from me, Gertrude never had such a feed in her young life. She's frisky enough to bite a Boston bull.

MOLLIE.

(*At R. C.*)

What will Miss Loganberry say?

SKEET.

She said it already. She thinks Gertrude bit the Doctor and caught the distemper. She put her to bed with a mustard plaster and a hot water bottle. The old lady's got a job that'll keep her upstairs the rest of the evening. Where's the boss?

MOLLIE.

Do you mean Mr. Ted?

SKEET.

Sure. Only I forgot his name.

MOLLIE.

He's out on the veranda looking at the scenery with the Honolulu humming-bird.

SKEET.

What'll I do with these? (*Refers to lemonades.*)

MOLLIE.

Take them up to Mr. Ryker's room.

SKEET.

I did. But I can't find him. (*Places tray on desk.*)

MOLLIE.

(*Up to him.*)

Oh, Skeet, I'm so nervous. I'll be thankful when those two men are out of the house. If they ever find out that we've deceived them and that Ted didn't get home on time—

SKEET.

(*Looking off C. D. to R.*)

Sh! Watch yer step. Here comes the Doctor.

Enter DOCTOR from C. D. from R.

DOCTOR.

(*At R. C.*)

Well, the young man hasn't showed up yet and the last train is in. It looks as if you were going to lose, Mollie.

(*Mollie turns her back on him and busies herself up stage.*)

SKEET.

(*Up C.*)

A good poker player is always sure of his hand before he stakes his little pile. Are you real sure of your hand, Doc?

DOCTOR.

I guess I'm sure all right, for you see I hold the winning cards.

SKEET.

I've often thought that way, too. When all of a sudden up pops the little joker, and it's all off.

DOCTOR.

I've been talking to Ryker the lawyer. He says he is going back to the city tomorrow. (*Rubs hands together gleefully.*) The place will be sold at auction and in two weeks we'll be running the finest Liquor Cure in the Catskills.

SKEET.

(*Sarcastically.*)

Gee, you got it all mapped out, ain't you?

DOCTOR.

Let me see. (*Looks around.*) I think I'll turn this office into a consultation room, and I'll put two or three padded cells in the dining room.

MOLLIE.

(*At L. C.*)

If I were you I don't think I'd order the furniture just yet.

DOCTOR.

You think someone can overbid me at the auction? Bah, I'm not afraid. I don't think anyone else wants the old place. All it's fit for is a Sanitarium. (*Goes toward her.*) If you're real good, Mollie, I might get you a place as a nurse.

MOLLIE.

(*With spirit.*)

I guess not. This Inn'll never be turned into a Booze Cure as long as Ted Gilmore's on earth.

(*SKEET comes down C.*)

DOCTOR.

(*Sneers.*)

Oh, won't it?

SKEET.

(*At his R.*)

Naw, it won't!

DOCTOR.

Young Mr. Gilmore is probably having a good time down in New York. I've heard he's a pretty gay young man. He doesn't give a hang whether the old place is sold or not.

MOLLIE.

Oh, yes he does.

DOCTOR.

(*Loudly.*)

Then why isn't he here to take charge tonight?

MOLLIE.

(*Louder.*)

He is here!

DOCTOR.

What!

MOLLIE.

He's been here a couple of hours.

DOCTOR.

I don't believe it.

SKEET *grasps DOCTOR back of his coat collar with L. hand, jerks him to R. with a vicious push and then takes C.*

SKEET.

You say that again and someone'll have to call an ambulance.

DOCTOR.

How did he get here? He wasn't on the train. Only one passenger got off, a lady.

MOLLIE.

He was here before the train pulled in.

DOCTOR.

Well, I want to see him. I—

SKEET.

(Takes his arm and leads him to door R.)

You! You'd better make a noise like a cake of ice and keep cool. And remember, the first train for the village leaves here at seven o'clock in the morning.

DOCTOR.

But, I—

SKEET.

That'll do fer you. The guests at this hotel ain't allowed to talk back to the help. You'd better run upstairs and brush your hair fer dinner. *(Pushes him out at R.)*

MOLLIE.

(Crosses to SKEET at R.)

Skeet, you're all right. I don't know what I'd do if you weren't here to help me. You're a good pal, Skeet, and you're white clean through. *(Passes him going to door R., turns and looks at him giggling. SKEET at R. C. acts bashful and giggles. MOLLIE exits R., looking back at SKEET and bumping into the door as she exits.)*

SKEET.

Gee, she's a nice girl. She's a girl in a million.

Enter JIM RYKER from C. D., R. side, wearing dinner clothes and top hat.

JIM.

Hello, Skeet, I've just been taking a walk down to the lake. I thought maybe Ted might take it into his head to row across.

SKEET.

(Takes tray to him.)

I been a lookin' fer you. *(Extends tray.)* Here, have a Mamie Taylor on the house.

JIM.

Why this generosity? Is it your birthday?

SKEET.

No, sir. It's in honor of Mr. Ted. He's come home.

JIM.

Then it looks as if the old Inn won't be sold for a Sanitarium after all.

(SOFT MUSIC, "Farewell to Thee" on ukulele heard off C. to L.)

SKEET.

I tell you it was a close call, but he got home just in time.

JIM.

Where is he? I want to have a good long talk with him. We haven't had a good long talk for over a year.

SKEET.

For over a year? *(Blankly.)* Why, I didn't know you and him ever *did* have a good long talk. I never knew that you knowed him.

JIM.

Why sure. He and I used to be college chums. That's why his grandfather appointed me as executor of the estate.

SKEET.

Would you know him if you saw him again?

JIM.

Know him? Why, certainly.

SKEET.

He's changed a whole lot. Here, take a Mamie Taylor.

JIM.

No, thank you. I won't indulge until I've talked to Ted. I have to keep my head clear for business, you know. Where is he?

SKEET.

(Rattled.)

I don't know. I think he's upstairs putting a hot mustard plaster on little Gertrude. *(Comes down to JIM.)* Are you sure you know him, Mr. Ryker?

JIM.

I'd know Ted Gilmore if I met him in Heaven.

SKEET.

(To audience.)

Gee, I'll have to find Miss Mollie and put her wise. *(To JIM.)* I'll find him and send him to you—maybe!

(Puts tray on counter and runs off R.)

HENRIETTA.

(Heard off C. D. at rear singing.)

"Farewell to thee,

Farewell to thee,

Thou dearest one that dwells among the flowers!"

JIM starts in surprise. He crosses up C., listening as HENRIETTA continues singing. Enter AUNT J. from L.

AUNT J.

'Scuse me, boss, I's lookin' fo' Miss Mollie. It's time to ring de chimes fo' dinner.

JIM.

I think she's upstairs.

(HENRIETTA sings louder. JIM listens.)

AUNT J.

Yes, sah. (*Crosses to R.*)

JIM.

(*Up C.*)

Say, auntie, who is that singing?

AUNT J.

(*Waddles up C., looks off.*)

Dat's de new lady dat come dis afternoon.

JIM.

It sounded like—but, no, that's impossible. Is her name Darby, auntie, Henrietta Darby?

AUNT J.

'Deed an' I dunno. Look at de register. (*Comes down R.*)

JIM.

I'm almost afraid to look. (*Singing grows louder, he rushes to register, opens it, turns pages rapidly, reads, jumps back in surprise.*) Jumping Jupiter, my widow! (*Grabs grip from behind counter, rushes to window, breaks glass, jumps through window and exits. During this action the singing has ceased and the same tune is played softly but in rapid tempo by orchestra.*) Enter MOLLIE from R.

MOLLIE.

What was the crash, Aunt Jubilee?

AUNT J.

(*Running around very much excited.*)

Dat lawyer man, Mistah Ryker, he's gone plum 'stracted and crazy in d' head. He takes one look at de register, let out a yell like a hippo-peat-apotamus, bust open de window and jump through! (*Looks out of window.*)

MOLLIE.

He's in the motor car and is making a bee line for the station.

Enter SKEET from R.

SKEET.

Miss Mollie, I've been looking everywhere for you. It's all off. We've got to get another Teddy. The lawyer and him is old friends. (*Rapid action and dialogue from this point. Music louder.*)

MOLLIE.

The lawyer and Ted?

SKEET.

Sure. Tell the boss it's all off. Mr. Ryker is acquainted with the real Ted.

MOLLIE.

He's gone.

SKEET.

Who?

MOLLIE.

The lawyer. He jumped out of the window and has started for town.

SKEET.

(*Yells.*)

Then we've still got a chance. Hurray! (*Grabs AUNT J. by both hands.*) He's gone and Ted's home and I don't care what happens to us now. (*Swings AUNT J. rapidly around, shouting "Hurray!"*)

AUNT J.

Lemme alone, boy. Turn me loose! (*Down L. with SKEET.*)

MOLLIE rings dinner chimes. *Music grows louder. Enter MAN and HENRIETTA from C. D. DOCTOR and Miss L. from R.*

MOLLIE.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me introduce the new proprietor. *Ted's come home!*

(AUNT J. and SKEET at L. HENRIETTA up L. C. MAN and MOLLIE in middle of stage. DOCTOR down R. C. MISS L. in door R.)

CURTAIN.

For Second Curtain: MAN stands C. with LADIES all around him shaking hands, etc. SKEET laughing and pointing finger at the baffled DOCTOR.

For Third Curtain: The seven characters stand bowing to the audience.

AND HOME CAME TED

THE SECOND ACT.

SCENE—*The same as for Act I, but it is now 7:40 p. m. Lighted candelabra on mantel. Lighted chandelier. Strong blue lights shine in from C. D. and window. Foots and borders on full at the beginning of the act.*

Discovered: SKEET seated back of desk up L. Noise and laughter heard from dining room at L. Music, "Farewell to Thee" ("Aloha Oe"), takes up the curtain, but ceases as soon as the conversation begins.

Enter MAN from L. He comes to L. C., facing SKEET.

SKEET.

How did it go, boss?

MAN.

Not very well. I was disappointed.

SKEET.

What d' y' mean disappointed?

MAN.

What became of the pretty girl in the green and white dress that I saw this afternoon? She wasn't at dinner.

SKEET.

That's Miss Garwood. She had her dinner in her room.

MAN.

Will she be down tonight?

SKEET.

I dunno. Sometimes she reads or writes or something.

MAN.

Then I guess I'll take a row on the lake.

SKEET.

Wait a minute. (*Comes to him.*) I'll see what I can do. (*Goes to telephone behind screen.*) Hello, Central! (*Pause.*) Gimme this same number with four rings. (*Pause, then the bell rings four times.*) Hello, is this Miss Garwood? (*Pause.*) This is Skeet at the office. (*Pause.*) Yes, I'm all right, thanks; how're you? (*Pause.*) Oh, I thought maybe something was the matter, 'cause you weren't down for dinner. (*Pause.*) Oh, say! The new boss has arrived and he'd like to have you come down. He says he's lonesome. (*Pause.*) Naw, he ain't impatient. Just lonesome, that's all. Goodbye.

MAN.

(*As SKEET comes from behind screen.*)
Now, you've done it.

SKEET.

Wasn't that right?

MAN.

Right? You've queered the whole business.

SKEET.

Naw, nothin' like it. She'll come down. They always do. You gotta hand these dames the rough stuff once in a while.

MAN.

She'll have a fine opinion of me.

SKEET.

Sure she will. She'll think you're a big gun and she'll come down and tell you so. Did the other one say anything to you?

MAN.

Yes, she kept telling me about the moon in Honolulu.

SKEET.

Naw, I don't mean her. I mean the old lady. The Aunt Samanthy with the red feather sky-scraper.

MAN.

The one with the dog?

SKEET.

That's her. She's a funny old dame, ain't she?

MAN.

What's her name?

SKEET.

Party by the name of Loganberry.

MAN.

She acted in a most peculiar manner. Made signs at me all through dinner.

SKEET.

She's forty-three and desperate.

MAN.

If she ever gets me alone, I'll be kidnapped.

SKEET.

She's been waiting fer you seven years, and she's got it next her heart.

MAN.

Got what?

SKEET.

How do I know? I ain't a doctor. She just said to tell you as soon as you arrived. She's anxious to talk to you.

MAN.

Skeet, if you ever see us together you come right in and say that someone wants me on the phone. Get me? *Enter HENRIETTA from L.*

HENRIETTA.

(Comes C. to MAN.)

Well, what do you think of your guests by this time?

MAN.

Some of them are perfectly charming.

HENRIETTA.

(*Smiling.*)

Flatterer.

MAN.

Have you been here long?

HENRIETTA.

Mercy, no. I just arrived. The doctor told me I must find a quiet place in the mountains for my nerves. I've had such horrible experiences during the past year that I feel like a perfect wreck. But I feel sure that I am going to like the Rip Van Winkle Inn. I'll be better here, far from the maddening crowd. I've had a disappointment, Mr. Gilmore, and my heart is lacerated by the perfidy of man.

MAN.

Isn't that too bad?

HENRIETTA.

But in this charming spot I think I'll be able to forget all my troubles. That's the thing I like about this place. It's so quiet.

MAN.

Oh, yes, it's awfully quiet.

SKEET.

(*Down R.*)

I'll bet there's more quiet around here to the square mile than any other place in New York State.

HENRIETTA.

And I simply adore the mountains. They seem to carry me back to Honolulu. Do you ever have any balls or parties here, Mr. Skeet?

SKEET.

Well, it's pretty high up fer parties. All the balls are highballs.

HENRIETTA.

(Crosses to window.)

Oh, see the moon is coming out.

MAN.

(Up a little to her.)

So it is.

SKEET.

It does that once in a while.

HENRIETTA.

I wonder how the valley looks in the moonlight. *(Romantically.)* It must be gorgeous, bathed in white moonshine.

SKEET.

Not white, yellow! With foam on top.

HENRIETTA.

I think I'll go out. Won't you show me the view again? *(To MAN.)*

MAN.

(Goes behind desk.)

Awfully sorry, but I can't get away just now. Got to balance up the books.

HENRIETTA.

(Obviously disappointed.)

Oh, I wanted to tell you about my troubles.

SKEET.

(Aside to MAN.)

She thinks you're a policeman.

Enter DOCTOR from L.

HENRIETTA.

(Goes to him.)

Oh, Doctor, won't you show me the moon?

DOCTOR.

(Down L.)

Show you what?

HENRIETTA.

The moon. I want to see it shining down in the valley. And I left my ukulele on the veranda.

DOCTOR.

I'll be delighted. (*Offers his arm, they start out C. D.*)

HENRIETTA.

It reminds me of the moon-kissed beach at Waikiki. Have you ever been in Honolulu? (*They stroll out C. D. to L.*)

MAN.

(*Laughing.*)

That seems to be her long suit—the moon in Honolulu. In ten minutes she'll be playing the ukulele and singing "Farewell to Thee!"

SKEET.

(*Crosses to L.*)

I think I'll go out and see if I can't start a little disturbance in the kitchen. I ain't had nothin' to eat since the last time. (*Exits L.*)

Enter Miss L. from R.

MISS L.

(*Sees MAN up L., waves finger at him and speaks coquettishly.*)

Ah, there you are!

MAN.

(*Imitates her tone.*)

Yes, here I am.

MISS L.

I've been looking everywhere for you, Theodore.

MAN.

(*Comes to her.*)

And at last you have found me. What can I do for you?

MISS L.

(*Close to him.*)

Isn't this just like old times, Teddy?

MAN.

Well, really—

MISS L.

You haven't forgotten, have you?

MAN.

My memory is awfully bad at times. (*Pauses.*)
And this is one of the times.

MISS L.

It seems so strange that you are really here. I've waited, and waited and waited.

MAN.

You ought to be a good waiter by now.

MISS L.

You remember the night of our parting, don't you?

MAN.

Can I ever forget it?

MISS L.

Oh, why don't you call me by my name?

MAN.

Anything to oblige, Miss Huckleberry.

MISS L.

Loganberry.

MAN.

(*Hastily.*)

Yes, I mean Loganberry.

MISS L.

But you haven't forgotten my first name, have you?

MAN.

Oh, that would be too familiar.

MISS L.

Or "Cutie." That's what you used to call me.
"Cutie."

MAN.

(*To audience.*)

I wonder why Skeet doesn't come.

MISS L.

(*Overhearing.*)

Skeet? Are you waiting for him?

MAN.

Yes. He ought to be here this minute.

MISS L.

I'm forgetting how very busy you must be to-night. But we must have a long, cosy, confidential chat real soon. Oh, I have so much to tell you. And I still have it, Teddy. It has never left me. It is reclining right next to my heart.

MAN.

Don't you find it rather uncomfortable?

MISS L.

Uncomfortable? Teddy, how can you say such a thing?

MAN.

In summer, you know. It must be uncomfortable in summer.

MISS L.

What care I? I have never forgotten that night seven years ago. We were strolling in the moonlight.

MAN.

Were we?

MISS L.

Yes. Don't you remember?

MAN.

I forgot the moon.

MISS L.

And now you've returned to me, a successful business man.

MAN.

Not very successful.

MISS L.

Never mind, Teddy. Woman is like the ivy; the more you are ruined the closer she clings.

MAN.

Yes, and ivy is like the woman. The closer it clings the more you are ruined.

MISS L.

Someone is coming down stairs. We mustn't be seen together as yet.

MAN.

No, that's right. We mustn't.

MISS L.

We'll keep our little secret all to ourselves.

MAN.

Believe me, that's just what I want to do.

MISS L.

(*At door L.*)

And remember, I still have it right next to my heart. (*Giggles, blows him a kiss and exits L.*)

MAN.

Keep it there. That's the safest place on earth.

Enter DIANA from R. in handsome dinner gown.

DIANA.

Well?

MAN.

(*Looks at her.*)

I haven't been, but I feel a little better now.

DIANA.

I didn't know *you* were stopping at the Inn.

MAN.

Oh, yes. I'm here. I expect to be here for some time.

DIANA.

(*Comes to him impulsively.*)

Tell me, have you seen the hero of the tunnel?

MAN.

Yes, I saw him.

DIANA.

What was he doing?

MAN.

The last time I saw him. Let me see? I know.
He was shaving.

DIANA.

And did you tell him what I told you?

MAN.

Yes.

DIANA.

Was he startled?

MAN.

I should say he was. He cut himself.

DIANA.

And what did he say?

MAN.

When he cut himself? (*Smiles and shakes head.*)
That's been cut out by the board of censorship.

DIANA.

You know I don't mean that. (*Sits on settle, half facing the audience.*) What did he say when you gave him my message?

MAN.

It was the proudest moment of his life.

DIANA.

Really?

MAN.

You told me to tell him that you were proud to belong to a country that breeds men like me— (*hastily*) I mean like him. Isn't that enough to make any man proud?

DIANA.

Not a man like him. He's too noble. Now, tell me all about him. What is he like?

MAN.

(*Purposely misunderstanding.*)

What does he like? He likes you. (*Sits on the arm of the settle.*)

DIANA.

Did he say so?

MAN.

Oh, no. Certainly not. He isn't that kind of a man.

DIANA.

No, I'm sure he isn't.

MAN.

I meant that he likes girls like you. See? (*Slips over on settle beside her.*)

DIANA.

I suppose he knows lots of girls like me.

MAN.

No, I think I can safely say that he's never met one like you before.

DIANA.

What does he look like?

MAN.

A lobster.

DIANA.

What!

MAN.

I mean, I don't exactly know what he *does* look like. He looks like a man. That's it; just a plain, every day man.

DIANA.

(*Disappointed.*)

Oh, I thought he'd look like a hero.

MAN.

No, I don't think he does. How does a hero look?

DIANA.

Handsome and tall. He's tall, isn't he?

MAN.

Well, he's about as tall as I am.

DIANA.

And handsome?

MAN.

Yes. (*She looks at him.*) Oh, no! No, he isn't handsome. I was thinking about his brother.

DIANA.

I thought he would be much taller than you.

MAN.

Sometimes he looks taller. When he stands up.

DIANA.

When Skeet told me how he pulled him out of the tunnel I formed a picture of him in my mind.

MAN.

What kind of a picture? A comic valentine?

DIANA.

No, the picture of my ideal.

MAN.

I don't think he looks much like an ideal. In fact I wouldn't recognize an ideal if I saw one.

DIANA.

Wavy black hair brushed straight back, a winning smile and piercing black eyes. His eyes *are* black, aren't they?

MAN.

I don't think they are just now. They have been several times.

DIANA.

I pictured him as tall and muscular, yet very graceful.

MAN.

He's not so awfully graceful.

DIANA.

One of nature's noblemen with large broad—

MAN.

(*Interrupting.*)

Feet? He's got them all right.

DIANA.

(*Pouting.*)

I was going to say shoulders.

MAN.

Yes, he's got shoulders, too.

DIANA.

A low, commanding voice—

MAN.

(*Interrupting.*)

Low? (*In a deep voice.*) Like that?

DIANA.

And a face—

MAN.

Yes, he's got a face.

DIANA.

Clean cut and resolute.

MAN.

Two faced?

DIANA.

(*Rising.*)

You're making fun of me. I'm sure he'd never do anything like that. (*Pause.*) Would he?

MAN.

(*In a deep voice.*)

Oh, no; he's too noble.

DIANA.

You must think I am awfully bold.

MAN.

Oh, no. Why?

DIANA.

Here I am talking to you like an old friend and we haven't even been introduced.

MAN.

I never thought of that.

DIANA.

I am Diana Garwood.

MAN.

I am (*pauses*) delighted.

DIANA.

Do you know, I think you have been trying to deceive me all the time. Now, haven't you?

MAN.

(*In a deep voice.*)

Oh, no. I'm too noble.

DIANA.

Then you are—you are the hero of the tunnel?

MAN.

Do I look like a hero?

DIANA.

Tell me the truth.

MAN.

I haven't got a deep voice and piercing black hair brushed back, have I?

DIANA.

If you won't be serious (*starts to go up C.*).

MAN.

I am serious, and I only wish I had a deep, piercing voice.

DIANA.

You're not playing fair.

MAN.

Excuse me. You know they've been expecting the missing owner of the Inn to turn up all day. The new proprietor, I mean—

DIANA.

Then you are not—

MAN.

The hero of the tunnel?

DIANA.

You are Mr. Gilmore.

MAN.

The new proprietor. But my friends seem to call me Ted.

DIANA.

How silly you must think I am.

MAN.

Silly? I think you are the most sincere girl I have ever met.

DIANA.

(*Looks around.*)

I wonder where all the guests are.

MAN.

Some of them are out on the veranda looking at the moon.

DIANA.

It's turned out quite warm after all. It's rather hot in here, isn't it? I have a notion to look at the moon, too.

MAN.

There's a pretty walk clear down to the lake. I'll be glad to show you the way. (*Joins her.*)

DIANA.

And we can talk about the hero of the tunnel.

MAN.

And the moon.

DIANA.

It's just the same old moon, isn't it?

MAN.

Yes, but it never seemed as beautiful to me before. (*They stroll out C. D., going R.*)

Enter AUNT J. from L.

AUNT J.

Dat boy Skeet sure am makin' a onslaught into de provisions in mah kitchen. I neber see sech a ap-

petite in all mah born days. (*Sees the lemonade on the counter.*) Lawsy, lawsy, look at all de fancy lemonades somebody done lef' out yere so careless. (*Takes one and smells it.*) Smells mighty fancy, mighty fancy! (*Tastes it.*) An' it tastes jes as fancy as it smells. (*Drinks it.*)

Enter MOLLIE from R. in simple dinner dress.

MOLLIE.

(*Watches AUNT J. drink the lemonade.*)

Don't swallow the glass.

AUNT J.

Bless mah soul, Miss Mollie, I was jes' tastin' one ob dese yere fancy Mamie Taylor lemonades dat somebody done lef'. Dey cert'n'y do taste mighty tasty, dey shore do.

MOLLIE.

Skeet made them for Mr. Ryker.

AUNT J.

Well, Mistah Ryker ai' gwine to git one ob 'em anyhow.

MOLLIE.

Where is Skeet?

AUNT J.

Out'n de dining room eatin'.

MOLLIE.

Tell him that I have put old Mr. Gilmore's dress suit out on his bed and I want him to put it on.

AUNT J.

You wants Mistah Skeet to put it on?

MOLLIE.

Certainly.

AUNT J.

Den I cert'n'y wants to hang 'round an' see de excitement. If dat boy ever puts on old boss's dress suit he's gwine to get lost in de creases.

MOLLIE.

And you can have that old white muslin you like so well.

AUNT J.

Can I? Lawsy, lawsy! I's gotta put some powdah on mah face, den, 'kase I's most too highly com-
plected to wear white. I'd look like a blackberry
swinmin' 'round in a bucket ob milk.

MOLLIE.

Tell Skeet to hurry. Never mind, I'll tell him
myself. (*Exits L.*)

AUNT J.

I'd better make haste and git dat white muslin
dress 'fore she changes her mind. (*Crosses to door
R.*) I'm gwine to cut it ober in de latest style with
a harem-scarem skirt and a peek-a-boo waist and
wear it to church next Sunday. I'll bet I'll be de
belle ob de high-toned colored aristocracy. (*Minces
out at R.*)

Pause. Then enter TED from C. D., coming from R.

TED.

(*Looks around, then speaks off up R.*)

It's all right. There isn't anyone here.

Enter ELSIE from C. D., coming from R.

ELSIE.

Oh, Ted, I'm so frightened.

TED.

There's nothing to be frightened about, honey.
I'm here, and we're married now.

ELSIE.

I know, but papa has such a dreadful temper.

TED.

Don't worry about that. He can't do anything,

even if he is a Senator. We're both of age and he can't annul the marriage.

ELSIE.

Couldn't he take me away from you and send me back to school?

TED.

I'd like to see him try it. You're my wife now, and all the world can't take you from me.

ELSIE.

I wonder what they're doing at school now.

TED.

We should worry. They won't miss you until tomorrow.

ELSIE.

Oh, it would be dreadful if papa would follow us here.

TED.

He'll never dream that we came up here. He'll think we're on our way to Cuba or some place. (*Looks around.*) I'd better find the clerk and register.

ELSIE.

Maybe the Inn hasn't opened yet. (*Goes to desk.*)

TED.

Oh, yes. It opened Monday.

ELSIE.

I hope there isn't anyone here I know. (*Reads register.*)

TED.

I don't suppose they have a very big crowd.

ELSIE.

Oh, Ted!

TED.

(*Rushes to her.*)

What's the matter?

ELSIE.

Look there. (*Points to name on register.*)

TED.

(*Reading.*)

"Diana Garwood, Watertown, N. Y." Why, she's from your town, isn't she? Do you know her?

ELSIE.

Know her? She's my cousin.

TED.

Your cousin?

ELSIE.

Oh, we must leave here at once. I wouldn't meet Diana for the world.

TED.

But we can't leave.

ELSIE.

Oh, Ted! She'll telephone to papa.

TED.

We'll have to keep her quiet, that's all. There isn't any other train tonight and we've run out of gasoline. Something is wrong with the carburetor and we've two flat tires.

ELSIE.

Let's go to another inn.

TED.

There isn't any other.

ELSIE.

But I can't meet Diana.

TED.

Maybe she won't see us. And even if she does, she can't do anything. We're married.

ELSIE.

I know it. But, Ted, I'm so miserable.

TED.

Miserable? On your honeymoon? Oh, Elsie! (*Reproachfully.*)

ELSIE.

I know I shouldn't be, but everything was so sudden today. Our running away and getting the license and the ring and then the ride to the minister's and the wedding. I've done nothing but hurry all day, and I didn't have any wedding dress or bridesmaids or wedding cake or anything, and I haven't had anything to eat since noon (*tearfully*), and my head aches and we're out of gasoline and have two flat tires, and now we've got to run right into my cousin Diana. Oh, I'll never elope again as long as I live.

TED.

I hope you won't. (*Soft music at rear L., "Farewell to Thee," on ukulele.*)

ELSIE.

Forgive me, T-Ted, but I am so m-m-miserable. (*Sobs.*)

TED.

There, there, honey, everything's all right. I'll get you some supper and you won't have to meet your cousin Diana after all.

ELSIE.

Let's get some supper and then go away.

TED.

I can't get away. Not for a while at least until I can have the car repaired.

ELSIE.

(*Sobbing.*)

B-b-but I'm hungry, Ted. Even if I am a bride I still have an appetite, and I was too excited to eat any lunch.

TED.

Listen. What's that?

ELSIE.

Someone is playing a ukulele. (*Hums.*) "Farewell

to thee, farewell to thee, thou dearest one that dwells among the flowers—”

TED.

Stop it!

ELSIE.

What's the matter?

TED.

Don't sing that song?

ELSIE.

Why not?

TED.

I don't like Honolulu music. It makes me nervous.

HENRIETTA.

(Outside, up L. C., sings.)

“Farewell to thee, farewell to thee, thou dearest one that dwells among the flowers—”

TED.

That voice. *(Rushes to C. D., peers out L.)* It is! It is! *(Runs to register.)* Where's the register? *(Looks at it, starts back in alarm with a sharp intake of the breath, hurries down to ELSIE, grabs her.)* Quick! Gimme your grips. Put on your hat! We have to go.

ELSIE.

I thought you'd decided to stay.

TED.

We can't stay. We must leave at once.

ELSIE.

We can't leave. Something is wrong with the what-do-you-call-it and there's two flat tires. *(Singing dies away in the distance.)*

TED.

(Trying to force her out C. D.)

Hurry, hurry! I'll try and fix the car. If I can't we'll go just as it is.

ELSIE.

But you haven't any gas.

TED.

Then we'll walk.

ELSIE.

I won't walk. I'm hungry, and my head aches, and I'm p-p-perfectly miserable. (*Sobs.*)

TED.

Maybe I can get you a sandwich somewhere.

ELSIE.

I don't want a sandwich somewhere. I want my supper.

TED.

Don't think of that, honey. You have me.

ELSIE.

I know I have, but I c-c-can't eat you.

TED.

Oh, Elsie, you don't know how important it is that we get away from this place at once.

ELSIE.

Why?

TED.

Because—because, because—

ELSIE.

Because why?

TED.

Because we might meet your cousin and she might telephone your father.

ELSIE.

But you said papa couldn't do anything now we're married.

TED.

He might. I don't want to take any chances. He'd be here by midnight and drag you back to college. Hurry, Elsie. If you love me, hurry!

(*ELSIE starts out C. D. to L. TED pulls her back.*)

Not that way. She's out there on the veranda.

(ELSIE starts out C. D. to R. Suddenly starts back, grabs TED.) ELSIE.

No; she's out there—with a man.

TED.

Who is?

ELSIE.

Diana! (They rush to L. door.)

MOLLIE.

(Outside L.)

Never mind, auntie, I'll fix it myself.

TED.

Surrounded! Quick, the screen.

TED and ELSIE rush behind the screen as MOLLIE enters from L. MOLLIE.

Is anybody there? (Pause.) I thought I heard someone.

Enter SKEET from R. in evening clothes, much too large, and wearing bright red bow tie.

SKEET.

(Struts proudly across stage from R. to L., then slowly revolves, trying to see his back.)

Pretty foxy, I guess. (MOLLIE laughs.) How do you like it?

MOLLIE.

Like what?

SKEET.

Me full dress. The get-up! The suit! S-double-o-t suit.

MOLLIE.

It's a scream.

SKEET.

Is it a good fit?

MOLLIE.

You couldn't have a better fit if you were in a hospital.

SKEET.

I'm crazy to get a look at meself.

MOLLIE.

If you ever get one look you will be crazy.

Enter AUNT J. from L. in white dress.

AUNT J.

(Seeing SKEET at L. C.)

Oh, lawsy, lawsy! *(Laughs loudly.)*

SKEET.

(To AUNT J.)

What's the matter, little one? What's the joke?

AUNT J.

De joke? I'm lookin' right at it. *(Laughs.)*

SKEET.

Don't you like the suit?

AUNT J.

Like it? *(Laughs.)* Lawsy, 'deed I does. I ain't seen nothin' so funny since de St. Patrick Day parade. Is dat what you calls a full dress suit, Miss Mollie?

SKEET.

That's the trouble with it. *(Extends trousers.)*
It's too full.

AUNT J.

It does look kinder loose.

MOLLIE.

(At L.)

It's all right, Skeet, only you'd better go upstairs and put on a black tie.

SKEET.

Black? I ain't goin' to a funeral.

MOLLIE.

You are if you don't change that tie.

SKEET.

I'm kinda partial to red myself.

AUNT J.

Boy, dat tie makes you look like you got de nose-bleed.

SKEET.

Well, if it ain't the proper thing I'll change it.

MOLLIE.

That's right. You'll find several black ties in old Mr. Gilmore's room.

SKEET.

All right, I got you. Miss Mollie, the folks want to know if they can dance in the dining room?

MOLLIE.

Why, certainly. The victrola is in there now.

AUNT J.

Is you gwinter dance, Mistah Skeet?

SKEET.

You'd better believe it. When it comes to the light fantastic I'm the pride of the Plumber's Union.

AUNT J.

Where'd you learn how to dance?

SKEET.

In a correspondence school. (*Takes a few fancy steps.*) Look at that now. Fancy dancers ain't got nothin' on me.

MOLLIE.

You'd better hurry and change your tie. It's after nine.

SKEET.

In a minute. (*Runs out at R.*)

MOLLIE.

Jubilee, go out on the veranda and tell the folks to come in if they want to dance.

AUNT J.

Yas'm. When dat ole talkin' machine gits to playin' a jazz tune, I'm gwine to cut a few fancy steps mahself. (*Hums rag tune and dances a few steps. ELSIE sneezes back of the screen.*)

MOLLIE.

What was that?

AUNT J.

Sounded like a sneeze.

MOLLIE.

It's the cat. Hurry up and call in the guests.

AUNT J.

Yas'm, I'm a gwine. (*At C. D.*) Dats de first time I ever heard a cat with de influenzy. (*Exits C. D.*)

MOLLIE.

(*Pulling the screen aside.*)

Now you can come out.

TED.

We were just waiting.

MOLLIE.

Quick; you haven't a minute to lose. Nobody must see you.

TED.

Why not?

MOLLIE.

Because there's another man here taking your place. We didn't think you'd get here. You'll have to hide until tomorrow. Then I can get rid of the guests and everything will be all right.

ELSIE.

Oh, Ted, what does it all mean?

MOLLIE.

Come here. (*Rushes TED back of desk.*) Those stairs lead to the basement. Hurry down and don't let anyone see you. Why didn't you come on the afternoon train?

ELSIE.

How could we?

TED.

We were getting married this afternoon.

MOLLIE.

Getting married?

TED.

This is my wife.

ELSIE.

.We were married at the Methodist parsonage at two o'clock.

MOLLIE.

No wonder you missed the train.

TED.

Can you get us something to eat?

MOLLIE.

Yes, yes. Only hurry downstairs before anyone sees you. I'll bring your supper down to you and no one will be any the wiser until tomorrow.

ELSIE.

But I'd rather not—

MOLLIE.

(Interrupting.)

If you knew all the trouble Ted has caused already you wouldn't stand there arguing the question. Of course, if you want the guests to see you—

TED.

(Interrupting.)

No, no! Certainly not. We'll go down in the basement. Come on, Elsie.

ELSIE.

But I'm starving. I haven't had anything to eat since lunch.

MOLLIE.

(At rear C.)

Quick, someone is coming! *(TED descends.)*

ELSIE.

Please bring us something to eat right away.
(ELSIE descends.)

MOLLIE.

If I have any more excitement tonight I don't think I can stand it.

Enter SKEET from R., wearing black bow tie.

SKEET.

(*At R.*)

Well, how do I look now?

MOLLIE.

(*Comes to him.*)

Oh, Skeet, what do you think's happened?

SKEET.

Give it up.

MOLLIE.

Ted's come home!

SKEET.

I know it. He's out on the lawn with Miss Diana.

MOLLIE.

No; I mean the real Ted.

SKEET.

Honest? Where is he?

MOLLIE.

I was nearly scared out of my senses. He's down in the basement.

SKEET.

Has anyone else seen him?

MOLLIE.

I don't think so.

SKEET.

Then it's all right. Keep him down there until the Doctor leaves and keep cool.

MOLLIE.

I've got to give them something to eat.

SKEET.

Them? Is he twins?

MOLLIE.

Worse. He's married. That's why he didn't get in on the afternoon train.

SKEET.

Well, he's taken charge of the place before midnight. That'll square things with Mr. Ryker anyhow.

MOLLIE.

I'd forgotten all about him. I wonder what made him act that way. Aunt Jubilee said he jumped through the window like he'd been shot and away he went in the Doctor's car, and I haven't seen him since.

Enter AUNT J. from C. D.

AUNT J.

Come on in, folkses, de grand jubilee are nus am about to begin.

Enter DOCTOR and HENRIETTA from C. D.

HENRIETTA.

(Coming down L.)

You dance, don't you, Doctor?

DOCTOR.

Well, I don't brag about it. But if you'll teach me, I'll be a good pupil.

HENRIETTA.

Oh, you must be a good dancer. You're so light on your feet.

SKEET.

(Behind desk to MOLLIE, who is near him.)

Just like a ton of coal.

MOLLIE.

(Up L.)

Start up the music, Jubilee.

AUNT J.

(*At door L.*)

Yas'm. I'm gwine to play a jazz band piece, 'kase ebry time I plays one of dem I jes' naturally can't make mah feet behave. (*Hums and dances a few steps, then dances out L.*)

ENTER MAN and DIANA from C. D.

MAN.

(*Up C.*)

Didn't I hear something about dancing?

MOLLIE.

Yes. In the dining room.

(*Music off L.*)

SKEET.

Come on, Miss Mollie; let's open the ball.

MOLLIE.

I can't. I've got a job in the kitchen. (*Exits L.*)

MAN.

It sounds good. Shall we try it?

DIANA.

I'd love to. (*They dance out at L.*)

HENRIETTA.

Aren't you going to ask me, Doctor? I haven't danced since I left Honolulu.

DOCTOR.

I'll do my best. (*They dance out at L.*)

SKEET.

(*Comes to C., looks at audience, pauses, sighs.*)

All dressed up and no place to go. And there ain't another dame in sight.

Enter Miss L. from R.

MISS L.

(*Posing at R.*)

I thought I heard some music.

SKEET.

(*To audience.*)

I knew it. Friday always was my Jonah day.

MISS L.

(*Minces to him.*)

Are you dancing, Skeet?

SKEET.

Not yet. I don't believe I can do this one.

MISS L.

Oh, yes you can. It's only one, two, three; one, two, three. (*Dances in time to music.*) See?

SKEET.

(*Imitates awkwardly, but not to the point of burlesque.*)

I got y'. One, two, three; one, two, three!

MISS L.

And then around like this. (*Swings him.*)

SKEET.

Wait a minute! Don't do it so sudden like. You wanta give me notice when you do the merry-go-round. What is this here dance, anyhow?

MISS L.

It's the Banana Slide.

SKEET.

It's too slippery for me.

MISS L.

Oh, no. (*Illustrates.*) It's like this. Just a slip, a dip and a slide.

SKEET.

If I ever do that slip I'll slide all over the floor and dip right on my nose.

MISS L.

You're just bashful, that's all. What you need is a little confidence.

SKEET.

What I need is a little Mamie Taylor.

MISS L.

Oh, we're missing all that grand music. Come on, now! One, two, three!

SKEET.

One, two, three!

MISS L.

(*Grabs him.*)

Now a slip and a one, two, three!

SKEET.

(*Dancing.*)

Ain't that heavenly? I could just die doin' this dance. (*They dance off L.*)

TED *ascends cautiously, looking around.*

TED.

It's all right. She isn't here.

ELSE *ascends and comes down C.* TED *back of desk.*

ELSIE.

I want an explanation and I want it at once. (*Tapping foot angrily.*)

TED.

Now, Elsie, be a good fellow. Brace up.

ELSIE.

I won't brace up. I want to know what that woman meant by calling you Ted.

TED.

Now, don't start that all over again. I tell you I don't know. I never saw her before.

ELSIE.

She evidently knows you.

TED.

I can't help that, can I?

ELSIE.

And why has she hidden us downstairs in the basement like a couple of thieves?

TED.

I told you all that before. She hid us down there because she didn't want your cousin to see us.

ELSIE.

She doesn't know I have a cousin.

TED.

Well, I give it up. Oh, darling, can't you be a little patient? I've got so much to worry me as it is.

ELSIE.

And so have I. I haven't had anything to eat since lunch. (*Sees lemonade on counter.*) Oh, Ted!

TED.

What is it?

ELSIE.

Look there.

TED.

The girl evidently brought the first course.

ELSIE.

(*Takes a lemonade and drinks it rapidly.*)

It tastes awfully funny.

TED.

I can't stand lemonade. I hope she is going to bring us something else.

ELSIE.

(*Takes another lemonade and starts to drink it.*)

I never tasted lemonade like this before.

Miss L. gives a sudden scream off L. TED ducks down behind the desk and ELSIE rushes back of the

screen. Music stops. Enter from L. Miss L. followed by DOCTOR and HENRIETTA.

MISS L.

Oh, I never was so embarrassed in my life.

HENRIETTA.

You didn't hurt yourself, did you?

MISS L.

No, I don't think so. Only it was an awful jar.

Enter MAN and DIANA supporting SKEET, who limps in an exaggerated manner.

SKEET.

Oh, oh!

ALL.

Are you badly hurt?

SKEET.

I dunno but I think I cracked the floor.

DOCTOR.

You are limping?

SKEET.

Yes, I know it. I think I broke (*pauses, feels ankle*).

ALL.

(*Bending toward him.*)

Yes, yes?

SKEET.

My ankle feels all right. But I know I broke something.

ALL.

You broke?

SKEET.

I broke my New Year's resolution.

MISS L.

I thought you said you could dawnce all the fawncy dawnces.

SKEET.

I thought I could, but that fawncy dawnce was too fawncy for me. I got the dip and the slide all

right, but when I came to the slip, that was me knock-out! (*Limps to R.*)

MISS L.

Aren't you coming back and finish it?

SKEET.

Nope. It finished me. I'm going to bed. These here fawncy dawnces may be all right, but take it from me, I'd rather git mixed up in a football slug-ging match any day in the week. I see now why they call it the Banana dance. I got the slip all right, all right. Good-night! (*Exit R.*)

MISS L.

(*Goes to MAN at L.*)

Teddy, you're a lovely dancer. I'm sure *you* wouldn't let me fall.

MAN.

(*Hesitates.*)

I don't know. I might do worse than Skeet.

MISS L.

I'll run the risk. Tell Jubilee to play a slow dreamy waltz. (*Takes MAN.*) Now, one, two, three! (*They waltz.*) My, I could waltz to Paradise with you. (*Music heard off L.*)

MAN.

Let's reverse and go the other way. (*They waltz out at L.*)

DOCTOR and HENRIETTA stroll out at L. DIANA crosses and sits R. ELSIE reaches from screen to get the last glass of lemonade from the counter. DIANA sees her arm.

DIANA.

(*Alarmed.*)

Oh! (*Starts to screen.*) What's that?

ELSIE.

Don't look, don't look! There isn't anyone here.

DIANA.

I will look. (*Removes the screen.*) Elsie!

ELSIE.

Diana!

DIANA.

What are you doing here?

ELSIE.

Drinking a glass of lemonade. (*Drinks calmly.*)

DIANA.

But—I don't understand. I thought you were in school. Elsie! What does this mean?

ELSIE.

Oh, Diana, I've done an awful thing!

DIANA.

Not expelled?

ELSIE.

Worse. I've eloped.

DIANA.

Elsie!

ELSIE.

I was married at the Methodist parsonage at two o'clock this afternoon.

DIANA.

Married? To Lord Vaughan?

ELSIE.

I should say not. You've never met my husband. He's from New York.

DIANA.

But think of your father.

ELSIE.

I won't! I'm not going to spoil my honeymoon that way. Every time I think of him I realize how miserable I am.

DIANA.

Oh, Elsie, how could you?

ELSIE.

You'd have done the same thing in my place. My husband is the most fascinating man I ever saw.

DIANA.

You should telegraph your father at once.

ELSIE.

Oh, Diana, he'd be here in an hour or two and take me back to school. You know what an awful temper he's got. And if he ever catches Ted—

DIANA.

Ted?

ELSIE.

My husband.

DIANA.

Is Ted your husband?

ELSIE.

Yes. Do you know him?

DIANA.

I've seen him, but I never knew he was a married man.

ELSIE.

He said he didn't know you.

DIANA.

Your father must be notified at once. At once, do you hear? This is serious.

ELSIE.

Of course it's serious, but papa can't do anything now.

DIANA.

He can! He'll have him arrested for kidnapping or abduction or whatever you call it.

ELSIE.

(Triumphantly.)

He can't. I'm of age and my husband is of age and we're legally married with a ring and a minister

and everything. And here's the marriage license.
(*Takes it out.*)

DIANA.

What will Lord Vaughan say?

ELSIE.

The Lord only knows.

DIANA.

You were engaged to him?

ELSIE.

No, I wasn't, not really engaged. He only thought I was.

DIANA.

It had been announced in all the papers.

ELSIE.

I never could marry a man like that. He's over forty and he hasn't any front hair at all.

DIANA.

Oh, I don't know what to do.

ELSIE.

I'll tell you. Get me something to eat and three or four more of those funny lemonades.

Enter MOLLY from L. with lunch on tray.

MOLLIE.

Here's the lunch.

DIANA.

Mollie, what does this mean?

MOLLIE.

(*To ELSIE.*)

I thought I told you to stay down in the basement.

ELSIE.

I was looking for the lunch.

MOLLIE.

Miss Diana, this is Ted's wife.

DIANA.

So she told me. She is my cousin.

MOLLIE.

Good gracious, what became of the Mamie Taylors?

ELSIE.

Have you lost some one?

MOLLIE.

Those lemonades, where are they?

ELSIE.

I drank them.

MOLLIE.

All of them?

ELSIE.

Every drop. (MOLLIE *throws up her hands in despair.*) And I'm beginning to feel so funny.

MOLLIE.

Funny? You'll feel worse than that in a minute. (*Takes her arm.*) You come up to my room and go to bed.

ELSIE.

I won't go to bed until I've had some supper.

MOLLIE.

I'll bring your supper to you. (*Leads her to R.*)

ELSIE.

I've got to say good-night to my husband.

MOLLIE.

I'll say it for you.

ELSIE.

Will you? Oh, I feel so funny and I'm getting sleepy.

MOLLIE.

Come along. Hurry! (*Hurries her out at R.*)

DIANA *is seated down R.* Enter MAN and Miss L. *from L.*

MISS L.

And now good-night, Teddy. I'll see you the first thing in the morning.

MAN.

(*Mutters.*)

Not if I see you first.

MISS L.

What say?

MAN.

I said I had an awful thirst.

MISS L.

Good-night. I wouldn't go up so soon, but I'm afraid little Gertrude isn't well. She had a dreadful attack of indigestion just before dinner. (*At door R.*) Good-night, you silly, silly boy! (*Throws kiss at him, giggles and exits R.*)

MAN.

(*Comes down to DIANA.*)

What do you say to the next dance?

DIANA.

(*Rises, faces him scornfully.*)

No, thank you.

MAN.

What's the matter?

DIANA.

There's no use trying to deceive me any longer. I know all about it.

MAN.

You do?

DIANA.

Yes, I do. I trusted you. I never dreamed that you were not a gentleman.

MAN.

I always try to be.

DIANA.

Indeed? And what, pray, is your definition of a gentleman?

MAN.

Are you serious?

DIANA.

I was never more serious in my life.

MAN.

What have I done?

DIANA.

Have you acted as a gentleman?

MAN.

I think I have.

DIANA.

You have queer ideas on that subject. What do you call a gentleman?

MAN.

Let me see. A gentleman is a man who takes his share of the world and lets other people take theirs, a man who is clean inside and outside, who neither looks up to the rich nor down on the poor, and who can win without bragging and lose without squealing, a man who is considerate to women, children and old people, who is too brave to lie, too honorable to deceive and too generous to cheat. That is a gentleman! (*Wait for applause.*)

DIANA.

Then you cannot class yourself in that category.

MAN.

Isn't that putting it a little strong?

DIANA.

Not half strong enough. You have deceived me, you have deceived everybody.

MAN.

I only did it to help Skeet and Miss Mollie.

DIANA.

And how about Elsie?

MAN.

Elsie? Elsie who?

DIANA.

My cousin, Elsie M'Corkle. You see I know everything.

MAN.

I don't know what you are talking about.

DIANA.

You do! She has confessed all. How can I break the news to her father?

MAN.

Who *is* her father?

DIANA.

You'll find out soon enough. He'll be here in the morning to introduce himself.

MAN.

Indeed?

DIANA.

And Elsie was engaged to Lord Vaughan.

MAN.

Well, why don't she marry him?

DIANA.

How can she when she married you this afternoon?

MAN.

I beg pardon?

DIANA.

Don't try to deceive me any longer. Your wife is waiting for you upstairs in Mollie's room.

MAN.

But there's some mistake. I haven't any wife.

DIANA.

Didn't you elope with Elsie this afternoon? Didn't you marry her at the Methodist parsonage at two o'clock?

MAN.

I did not. I didn't marry her at all.

DIANA.

You didn't marry her? Oh, you villain. She thinks she is your wife. I'll telegraph her father at once.

MAN.

But—

DIANA.

Don't speak to me. Don't you dare to speak to me. Oh, if I were a man I'd horsewhip you.

Enter MOLLIE from R.

MAN.

Mollie can explain.

DIANA.

Mollie, I must drive over to the telegraph office at once. Is the car outside?

MOLLIE.

Yes, but it's so late. You'd better wait until tomorrow.

DIANA.

I won't wait. I'll not sleep a wink until I have exposed this man. (*Crosses to door C.*) He told me he didn't marry Elsie at all. Oh, the disgrace, the disgrace! (*Exit C. D.*)

MAN

What does she mean?

MOLLIE.

Ted eloped with her cousin this afternoon. They were married at two o'clock. That's why he missed the train.

MAN.

Then he's here?

MOLLIE.

I hid him in the basement. His wife is asleep in my room and everything is all right until tomorrow. Then as soon as Stone leaves I'll introduce Ted as

the real proprietor and he can take charge of the Inn and sign the papers.

MAN.

And what will happen to me?

MOLLIE.

You can explain everything. Diana is a sensible girl. She'll listen to you in the morning.

MAN.

She'll listen to me tonight. (*Goes to C. D.*)

MOLLIE.

What are you going to do?

MAN.

I'm going to prove that I'm a gentleman. That's all. (*Exit C. D.*)

TED appears behind the desk.

TED.

Did you get it? The supper, I mean.

MOLLIE.

(*Down R.*)

Oh, you scared me!

TED.

Where's my wife?

MOLLIE.

Her cousin found her. She's upstairs in my room.

TED.

I'll go up and see her.

MOLLIE.

You'll do nothing of the sort.

TED.

Why not?

MOLLIE.

Because the guests mustn't see you.

TED.

I'm not afraid of the guests. That is, I don't care who sees me, except Miss Darby.

MOLLIE.

Miss Darby? The Honolulu humming-bird! Do you know her?

TED.

Know her? I should say I do. That's what brought her to New York. I used to be engaged to her.

MOLLIE.

Engaged?

TED.

Then I found out we weren't suited to each other and I ran away.

MOLLIE.

And she ran after you?

TED.

Exactly. She's got all my letters and threatens to sue me for ten thousand dollars for breach of promise.

MOLLIE.

Then back to the basement for you! Quick, she's in the dining room.

TED.

But I want my wife.

MOLLIE.

Your wife will be all right. You can see her in the morning.

TED.

And I want something to eat.

MOLLIE.

I'll get you a lunch. Tomorrow I'll get rid of Miss Darby and Doctor Stone and then you can take charge of the place.

TED.

Take charge of it?

MOLLIE.

Certainly, I'm going to resign. This is too much excitement for me.

TED.

But I'm not looking for a place.

HENRIETTA.

(*Outside L.*)

We'd better go.

TED.

She's coming.

MOLLIE.

Quick! Down in the basement! (TED *disappears.*)

Enter DOCTOR and HENRIETTA from L.

HENRIETTA.

(*Coming down stage C., not seeing MOLLIE, who is up L.*)

It must be frightfully late.

DOCTOR.

(*Close to HENRIETTA.*)

I never knew an evening to pass so quickly.

HENRIETTA.

You do say the sweetest things! Do you know, Doctor, I never met a man who impressed me so favorably on short acquaintance.

DOCTOR.

And I never met a more charming lady.

MOLLIE.

(*In a tone of exasperation.*)

Good-night!

HENRIETTA.

Oh, Miss Mollie, I didn't know you were there. I want to speak to you. I have some jewels and a precious little box in my satchel upstairs. Do you think they'll be safe?

MOLLIE.
(*Down C.*)

The house is only responsible for articles left in the safe.

HENRIETTA.

Oh, have you a safe? I'm so glad. My little keepsakes mean a whole lot to me. I'll bring them down. (*Exit R.*)

MOLLIE.
(*Crosses to door L. and calls.*)

Jubilee!

AUNT J. *appears at door L.*

AUNT J.

Ma'am?

MOLLIE.

I wish you'd prepare a little lunch for me. Three or four sandwiches, a couple of pieces of pie and a glass of milk. I'll have to sit up late.

AUNT J.

Yas'm.

MOLLIE.

And then lock up the kitchen and dining room.

AUNT J.

Yas'm. (*Exits L.*)

DOCTOR.

(*Up C.*)

So you expect to sit up late, do you, Mollie?

MOLLIE.

(*Down L.*)

Yes.

DOCTOR.

(*Coming down C.*)

Poor girl! You still think you can hoodwink me, do you?

MOLLIE.

(*At L. C.*)

What d' y' mean hoodwink?

DOCTOR.

(Close to her, speaks savagely.)

I mean that unless your precious Ted has an interview with Ryker tonight and signs those papers taking over the Inn, the place will be sold at auction.

MOLLIE.

Mr. Ted took charge of the Inn tonight, didn't he? He's here now, isn't he?

DOCTOR.

Oh, yes, he's here all right; but where is Ryker?

MOLLIE.

(Nervously.)

He's upstairs.

DOCTOR.

He's not upstairs and you know it. He wasn't here at dinner and he isn't anywhere about the place. I've made a complete investigation, Mollie. And so after all your pains you've lost the game and I take the trick.

MOLLIE.

Oh, go away and leave me alone. Aren't you satisfied with the misery you have caused me already? What have I ever done to you? Why are you hounding me this way?

DOCTOR.

I don't wish to hound you, Mollie. All I want is the old Inn, and believe me, I'm going to have it!

MOLLIE.

(With great energy.)

You are not! If I have to go to the village and drag Jim Ryker back here by the hair of his head. My fighting blood is up, Ira Stone, and I defy you!

Enter DIANA from C. D.

DIANA.

Mollie, what's the matter?

MOLLIE.

Nothing, Miss Diana. I'm only a little upset, that's all. Did you send your telegram?

DIANA.

Yes. The Senator will be here the first thing in the morning. I'll go up and look after Elsie. Good-night, Mollie. (*Exit R.*)

DOCTOR.

Elsie? Who's Elsie?

MOLLIE.

One of the guests. If you want to go to your room, Doctor, don't let me keep you.

DOCTOR.

I'll go to my room when I get good and ready.

Enter JIM RYKER from C. D., disguised as an old man, long tan coat, old-fashioned plug hat, white wig and chin whiskers, large spectacles. He walks with a cane, is bent over and disguises his voice.
Note: The audience must not recognize him as JIM.

JIM.

Evening, folks!

MOLLIE.

(*Goes behind desk.*)

Good evening, sir.

JIM.

This is the Rip Van Winkle Inn, ain't it?

MOLLIE.

Yes, sir.

JIM.

Then I want to get a room fer the night.

Enter MAN from C. D. He stands at rear.

MOLLIE.

All right.

JIM.

I started to drive down to town tonight, but my

old bay mare Susannah balked on me and I don't 'low I'll do much travelin' till mornin'. Got a good room, have ye?

MOLLIE.

Yes, sir. (*Takes a key from the rack.*) I'll show you up.

JIM.

(*With hand back of ear.*)

Hey?

MOLLIE.

(*Down C. to him.*)

I'll show you your room.

JIM.

Yep. I want a room. Of course. What d' y' think I wanted, a stall?

MOLLIE.

(*At R. C.*)

Right up the stairs.

JIM.

Hey?

MOLLIE.

(*Loudly.*)

I said right up the stairs.

JIM.

Pairs? What fur?

MAN.

(*Comes down between JIM and MOLLIE.*)

Give me the key, Mollie. I'll take him up. (*Leads JIM to R.*)

JIM.

Did ye unhitch Susannah?

MAN.

Yes, I put her in the stable.

JIM.

Hey?

MAN.

No, I didn't give her any hay tonight. I'll feed her in the morning. Come on.

JIM.

(Places pug hat on the desk.)

Ain't I got to register?

MOLLIE.

(Pushes register to him.)

Right there.

JIM.

Where'll I write? *(Puts on spectacles.)*

MOLLIE.

(Loudly.)

Right there.

JIM.

Here? *(Points to line.)*

MOLLIE.

Yes!

JIM.

On this line?

MOLLIE.

(Loudly.)

Yes!

JIM.

Above it er below it?

MAN.

*(Beside him.)*Sign your name right there. *(Points.)*

JIM.

My full name?

MAN.

(Yells.)

Yes!

JIM.

I can't write.

MAN.

Never mind, it'll cost you five dollars just the same.

JIM.

Hey?

MAN.

Five dollars! *(Yells.)* Five!

JIM.

Alive? Of course I'm alive. Did y' think I was dead?

MAN.

I said five! (*Counts on his fingers.*) One, two, three, four, five!

JIM.

(*To MOLLIE, who is at his L.*)

What's he tryin' to do? Talk deaf and dumb to me? I can't talk thataway. (*Shakes his head at MAN, who pantomimes for him to follow him upstairs.*) Excuse me, mister, I didn't know you was deaf and dumb. It must be awful to be afflicted like that.

JIM and MAN are down stage at R. MOLLIE up L. C. DOCTOR down L. Enter HENRIETTA from R. carrying jewel box.

HENRIETTA.

(*Goes to MOLLIE.*)

There it is, Miss Mollie. Are you sure it will be safe?

MOLLIE.

Of course. (*MOLLIE and HENRIETTA go to safe.*)

TED appears back of desk, unobserved, watching them.

HENRIETTA.

That little box contains keepsakes. Some day they'll be worth ten thousand dollars to me.

MOLLIE.

I'll put it right here in the corner. (*Puts it in safe, but does not lock safe, only closes it.*)

JIM.

Wall, I reckon I'll go to bed. (*TED disappears.*)

MAN.

Right this way. (*Leads him to door R.*)

JIM.

Hey?

MAN.

Straw! (*Jerks him out at R.*)

HENRIETTA.

(*Crossing to R.*)

Good-night, Doctor. Until tomorrow.

DOCTOR.

Pleasant dreams.

HENRIETTA.

Good-night, Mollie.

MOLLIE.

(*Up C.*)

Good-night.

HENRIETTA.

I've had such a pleasant evening. (*Exit R.*)

Enter AUNT J. from L. with lunch on tray.

AUNT J.

Here's de lunch, Miss Mollie.

MOLLIE.

Put it on the desk, Jubilee, and then lock up.

AUNT J.

Yas'm. (*Puts lunch on desk, draws shades, locks C. D.*)

DOCTOR.

I really feel sorry for you, Mollie. You're a plucky little Irishwoman and you put up a good fight, but this time I happen to hold the winning cards. (*At door R.*) If you happen to be passing this way in two or three weeks you'll see this place turned into the finest Liquor Cure in the country. (*Laughs.*) Whenever I make up my mind to get a thing, I generally get it. (*Laughs and exits R.*)

MOLLIE.

I wish you'd make up your mind to get the small-pox. (*Sits down L.*)

AUNT J.

(Gets candle from behind desk and brings it to MOLLIE)

Everything's locked up now, Miss Mollie. Yere's your candle. Is you goin' to bed?

MOLLIE.

(Rises slowly.)

Yes, Jubilee, I think I will. *(Lights candle.)*

AUNT J.

Dis shore has been a strenuous day, Miss Mollie.

MOLLIE.

Indeed it has. Put out the lights.

AUNT J.

Yas'm. *(Turns out all the lights on the stage.)*
Good-night, Miss Mollie. *(Exits L.)*

MOLLIE.

I'll just leave the lunch on the counter and Ted can get it when he wants it. Well, I guess I'll go to bed. *(Yawns.)* This has certainly been a strenuous day for Mollie. Mr. Ryker is sure to be back in the morning and then I'll tell him everything. We'll save the old place yet. *(Yawns.)* My, but I'm sleepy. *(Goes to R.)* Skeet seems just as interested in the old place as I am. *(Pause.)* Or maybe it's me he's interested in. I wonder if he is. He's a nice boy, an awfully nice boy, and his heart is as big as all outdoors. *(Yawns.)* Well, there's plenty of work to be done tomorrow, but he'll help me. I can always depend on Skeet, and he and I can outwit a dozen such men as Doctor Ira Stone. Skeet and I! *(Pause.)* I wonder if he likes me.

(Sudden noise heard at window.)

(Whispers.) What's that? *(Blows out the candle, the stage is in total darkness.)*

(JIM opens the window at rear. "Creepy" music.)
There's someone trying to get in at the window. And it's broken. (*Listens.*)

(JIM appears at window with electric flashlight.)
Oh! (MOLLIE hides behind chair at R.)

JIM climbs in at window. He wears a long black coat and black slouch hat. A dark handkerchief conceals the lower part of his face. Note: The audience must not recognize the intruder, so be careful not to allow the flashlight to shine on him. He flashes light around stage, but does not see MOLLIE. He goes to safe and kneels at it. MOLLIE creeps up C. until she is immediately behind him. Take plenty of time for this action. Suddenly MOLLIE throws both arms around JIM's neck, forcing him backward to the floor. She screams loudly. They struggle on the floor, JIM with the jewel box. MOLLIE screams again. JIM pushes her to floor, rushes to window and jumps through.

AUNT J. enters with lighted lamp. Stage lights up a little.

AUNT J.

(At L., screaming.)

Help, fire, murder, police, burglums, burglums, burglums!

MOLLIE.

(Rises quickly.)

Where did he go?

AUNT J.

Right through the window.

Music changes from mysterious to "hurry." Enter SKEET from R. dressed in slippers and pajamas, his hair rumpled.

SKEET.

What is it?

MOLLIE.

Quick, quick, through the window!

(SKEET grabs the plug hat from the desk, dons it, rushes to window and jumps through, AUNT J. and MOLLIE watching him.)

CURTAIN.

Second Picture: AUNT J. and MOLLIE looking out of window.

Third Picture: AUNT J., MOLLIE and SKEET bowing to audience. Note: No other characters appear at this time, as the audience must not be allowed to suspect the identity of the robber.

CURTAIN.

AND HOME CAME TED

THE THIRD ACT.

SCENE—*The same as for Acts I and II, but it is now 9:30 a. m., the next morning. The room is in order, the safe is closed. Strong yellow light through C. D. and window.*

Discovered: AUNT J. sweeping and singing.

AUNT J.

(Singing to a "made-up" tune.)

Old Mistah Skeeter got bit by a bee,

He turned around and bited a flea,

Flea bit a gnat, gnat bit a jigger,

Den de whole menagerie done bit a nigger.

(TED raps on floor behind desk with a stick.)

AUNT J.

(Alarmed.)

What's dat? *(TED raps again.)* It's down in de basement. *(In frightened whisper.)* It's spooks! Oh, lawsy, lawsy, burglums las' night and spooks dis mawnin'. It's sure time for dis yere 'spectable colored lady to git herself another situation. *(TED gives three distinct knocks on floor.)* Um! Um! Jes' listen at dat. *(Backing toward L., her eyes on counter.)* I'm sure gwine to go while de goin' is good.

Enter MOLLIE from L. AUNT J. bumps into her and screams loudly.

MOLLIE.

What's the matter, Jubilee? What is it?

AUNT J.

'Deed an' I dunno what it is. Spooks er burglums er sumpin'. Miss Mollie, I likes you and I likes de

place, but I cert'n'y ain't got no love for excitement, and burglums is bad enough, Lawd knows, but now yere comes some spooks.

MOLLIE.

What are you talking about?

AUNT J.

De spooks.

MOLLIE.

What spooks?

AUNT J.

Dat's what I dunno. I was jes' a sweepin' 'round yere ca'm and peaceful like, when all ob a sudden I yeerd it. Yas'm, I yeerd wif mah own ears.

MOLLIE.

Heard what?

AUNT J.

I dunno what. It jes' went boom-boom, dataway down in de basement.

MOLLIE.

Oh, you heard a noise in the basement?

AUNT J.

Yas'm, only it was worse 'n a noise. Sounded like ole Brother Gabriel blowin' his trumpet for de las' day.

MOLLIE.

Did you see what it was?

AUNT J.

Who, me? No, ma'am! *No, ma'am!* When I yeers a noise like dat all mah curiosity jes' naturally oozes out ob me.

MOLLIE.

There isn't any spook in the basement, Jubilee. It must have been your imagination.

AUNT J.

Imagination? No'm, it hain't dat, 'kase your imagination don't go rappin' and bangin' round boom-

boom. When mah imagination gits to actin' dataway I'm cert'n'y gwine to see a doctor.

MOLLIE.

You go into the dining room and finish waiting on the table and I'll see what's in the basement.

AUNT J.

Lawsy, Miss Mollie, don't you go down there. 'Kase dey ain't no tellin' what's gwine to happen if you does.

MOLLIE.

Never mind, Jubilee. You go into the dining room.

AUNT J.

(Crosses to L.)

Yas'm, I'm gwine, but harken to mah words, Miss Mollie, and don't you have no trouble wif dat boom-boom down in de basement. We's all liable to wake up yere some mawnin' and find ebry las' one ob us murdered plum dead wif our throats cut off. Yas'm, and den what's we gwine to do? *(Exit L. muttering.)*

MOLLIE.

(Goes behind desk and raises trap.)

Come up. There's no one here.

TED *ascends.*

TED.

Where's my wife?

MOLLIE.

Upstairs. She's all right. You needn't worry about her.

TED.

(Starts to R.)

I'm going to see her.

MOLLIE.

(Pulls him back.)

You're going to stay right down there in the basement until Doctor Stone leaves this house.

TED.

I won't. I'm going to my wife. I don't care who sees me. Even Henrietta Darby can't do anything now. I'm married.

MOLLIE.

The police are looking for you.

TED.

Police?

MOLLIE.

Yes, the police. You'd better give me that jewel case.

TED.

I don't know what you're talking about.

MOLLIE.

It contained nothing of value except your letters.

TED.

Has Henrietta lost my letters?

MOLLIE.

They were stolen from that safe last night in her jewel case.

TED.

Thank Heaven!

MOLLIE.

Now you're the only one around here who will profit by their loss.

TED.

Surely you don't think that I stole them.

MOLLIE.

I don't know, but the police have been notified.

TED.

Then if my letters are gone she hasn't anything on me. There's no use of my hiding any longer.

MOLLIE.

But Doctor Stone is still here. He'll see you.

TED.

What do I care? Who is Doctor Stone?

MOLLIE.

The man who wants to buy the Inn.

TED.

What's that got to do with me?

MOLLIE.

If you take charge of the Inn and manage it successfully for a season the whole estate is yours for keeps.

TED.

I don't want the estate. I couldn't manage an Inn, and besides I've got to get back to Washington.

MOLLIE.

There was an awful scene last night. Diana Garwood has telegraphed to Elsie's father.

TED.

Is he here?

MOLLIE.

He'll be here this morning.

TED.

Then I'm going to leave at once.

MOLLIE.

He'll be here in ten minutes.

TED.

And meet Henrietta? She'll give me a nice reputation to the old gentleman.

MOLLIE.

You'd better go back in the basement and keep cool until she leaves.

TED.

Can't you make her leave at once?

MOLLIE.

Yes, I can. Just as soon as Doctor Stone goes away this morning I'll tell her that she can't keep her room any longer.

TED.

Get her out of the house and I'll do anything you say.

MOLLIE.

Quick, down in the basement! Someone is coming.

TED.

Please get me something to eat. (*Disappears behind desk.*)

Enter DOCTOR from L. He wears auto cap, gloves and goggles.

DOCTOR.

Well, Mollie!

MOLLIE.

Not very, thank you.

DOCTOR.

(*At L. C.*)

Still got a grouch on, have you? Well, I don't blame you.

Enter SKEET from L.

MOLLIE.

Are you getting ready to leave?

DOCTOR.

For the present, yes. Your little plan didn't work very well, did it? The young man arrived on time to take charge of the Inn, but unfortunately the lawyer didn't show up and the papers haven't been signed. Pretty lucky for me, isn't it? I'm going down to the village and learn what became of Mr. Ryker, the lawyer. (*Exit C. D.*)

SKEET.

Gee, it 'ud be a lucky thing fer us if somebody 'ud touch a match to his gasoline tank. (*Goes back of desk.*)

Enter DIANA and MISS L. from L.

MISS L.

(Chattering excitedly.)

A robbery right here in the hotel! I simply can't get over it. And me with nearly sixty dollars and my grandfather's gold watch under my pillow.

DIANA.

(Goes to MOLLIE at R.)

Have you heard anything more about the burglar, Mollie?

MOLLIE.

No. The police from the village have been here, but they know as much about catching a burglar as the Ladies' Aid Society of the Congregational Church.

DIANA.

How is Elsie this morning?

MOLLIE.

Still sound asleep.

MISS L.

(Coming to C.)

Elsie? Who is Elsie?

DIANA.

My cousin. Mr. Gilmore's bride.

MISS L.

(Very much excited.)

Mr. Gilmore? Not Ted? *(Grasps DIANA's arm.)*
Ted Gilmore isn't married, is he?

MOLLIE.

(Positively.)

Yes, he is. At two o'clock yesterday afternoon at the Methodist parsonage.

MISS L.

(Totters toward chair.)

Oh, I'm faint. *(Sinks in chair.)* Water, water!
(Faints.)

SKEET *rushes off L.* DIANA and MOLLIE *fan* MISS L. SKEET *enters with glass of water.* MOLLIE *sprinkles* MISS L.'s face.

MOLLIE.

There!

MISS L.

(*Opening her eyes.*)

Where am I?

MOLLIE.

Just where you have been for the past forty years.
Single and unattached.

MISS L.

Oh, the perfidy of man! (*Rises.*) I never want to look upon his face again. (*Pulls locket from chain around her neck.*) And I've had it next my heart for seven years. (*Stamps it under foot.*) Oh! (*Crosses to R. in towering rage.*)

MOLLIE.

Where are you going?

MISS L.

I am going to pack my things and leave at once. Do you think that I'd remain under the same roof with such a man? Married! And he used to call me Cutie! (*Exits R. banging door after her.*)

SKEET.

(*At rear with MOLLIE.*)

Gee, I hope nobody ever acts that way about me.

MOLLIE.

Don't worry. They won't.

Enter MAN *from L.* He goes to DIANA at R. C.

MAN.

Diana!

DIANA.

Don't you dare to speak to me! I've just seen another instance of your perfidy.

MAN.

But you don't understand.

DIANA.

I understand entirely too much. Your wife is upstairs and her father will be here in ten minutes.

MAN.

But listen to me. I can explain everything.

DIANA.

You can explain to Elsie and you can explain to her father. (*Crosses to R.*) Perhaps you can explain to poor Miss Loganberry, who's been faithful to you for seven years, but you can not explain to me. (*Exits R.*)

MOLLIE.

(*Comes down C. to MAN.*)

Don't worry, sir. You'd better go and talk to her. Tell her the truth. There's no use trying to deceive them any longer. We might just as well pack up our things and leave at once.

MAN.

Leave? Why?

MOLLIE.

Because Mr. Ryker isn't here and Ted hasn't signed the papers.

MAN.

Oh, don't worry about a little thing like that. I signed the papers last night.

MOLLIE.

You did?

SKEET.

But that's forgery or something, in the first degree.

MOLLIE.

Wasn't it dangerous?

MAN.

What do we care for a little danger? Mr. Ryker

is ready to come back to the Inn just as soon as you get rid of the lady from Honolulu.

MOLLIE.

Miss Darby? Is he afraid of her, too?

MAN.

He said he wouldn't appear until she left.

MOLLIE.

That settles Miss Darby. She'll have to go at once. Where is she, Skeet?

SKEET.

In the dining room.

MOLLIE.

Tell her I want to see her.

SKEET.

Sure. (*Exits L.*)

MAN.

I think I'll go out on the tennis court and work off a little surplus energy. (*Goes to C. D.*)

MOLLIE.

You'd better see Miss Garwood and tell her everything.

MAN.

I'll see her at lunch. (*Exit C. D.*)

Enter HENRIETTA from L. MOLLIE comes down to R. C.

HENRIETTA.

Have you heard anything about the letters, Mollie?

MOLLIE.

Not a word.

HENRIETTA.

Let me see! Where were you standing when you heard the noise at the window last night?

MOLLIE.

(*Assumes same position as at end of the second act.*)

Right here. I was just going to bed.

HENRIETTA.

Were the doors locked?

MOLLIE.

Yes. Aunt Jubilee locked them and put out the lights. Then she went out there. (*Points to door L.*) And I was over here.

HENRIETTA.

In the dark?

MOLLIE.

No, I had a lighted candle. All of a sudden I heard a noise at the window and I blew the candle out. Then I crouched down here and a man opened the window and got in.

HENRIETTA.

How do you know it was a man?

MOLLIE.

It felt like a man.

HENRIETTA.

Could you see him?

MOLLIE.

Not very plain. He had a flashlight, but he didn't see me. He went over there to the safe and knelt down. I slipped up behind him and grabbed him around the neck.

HENRIETTA.

That's how you knew it was a man?

MOLLIE.

Yes. I pulled him back on the floor. Just here. And then I screamed.

HENRIETTA.

Did he have my jewel box then?

MOLLIE.

Yes. Aunt Jubilee came running in with a lighted lamp. He jerked away from me and jumped out of the window.

HENRIETTA.

You didn't find any clews, did you?

MOLLIE.

Not a thing. We looked everywhere, on the floor and on the desk and all over the room.

HENRIETTA.

Where was Skeet?

MOLLIE.

He came in just after the man jumped out of the window. He grabbed a hat from the desk and jumped out after him.

HENRIETTA.

Did he see anything?

MOLLIE.

No, the man had completely disappeared.

HENRIETTA.

And my jewel box with him. You didn't miss anything else, did you?

MOLLIE.

Not a thing. There wasn't anything else in the safe, except some old books and papers and he didn't touch them.

HENRIETTA.

Have you ever heard of a young man named Carpenter?

MOLLIE.

I don't think so. (*Thinks.*) Carpenter? No, I never heard of anyone named that.

HENRIETTA.

The letters in that box were of value to only one other person in the world, Frederick Carpenter.

MOLLIE.

How about Teddy Gilmore?

HENRIETTA.

You mean the manager of the Inn? I never saw

him before yesterday? Do you think he stole my jewel box?

MOLLIE.

No, certainly not.

HENRIETTA.

Those letters were worth ten thousand dollars to me. You see, it's this way. I was an opera singer in Honolulu. Last year I met a rich young lawyer from the States and we were married.

MOLLIE.

That's good.

HENRIETTA.

But the marriage didn't turn out very well. My husband was fickle, very, very fickle.

MOLLIE.

Did you ever catch him flirting?

HENRIETTA.

(Laughs.)

Catch him flirting? That's how I caught him.

MOLLIE.

That's bad.

HENRIETTA.

We were only married a short time when he was drowned.

MOLLIE.

Isn't that sad!

HENRIETTA.

After three or four months I met another young man. We fell in love at first sight.

MOLLIE.

And then?

HENRIETTA.

He went away and left me.

MOLLIE.

That's bad.

HENRIETTA.

Still we corresponded. He proposed to me in writing.

MOLLIE.

That's good.

HENRIETTA.

But after a while he stopped writing entirely.

MOLLIE.

That's bad.

HENRIETTA.

But not until he had written me sixteen letters burning with affection. Those letters were my evidence.

MOLLIE.

That's good.

HENRIETTA.

At last I read in a New York paper that he was paying attention to another woman.

MOLLIE.

That's bad.

HENRIETTA.

So I decided to follow him and sue him for a breach of promise.

MOLLIE.

And what was his name?

HENRIETTA.

Frederick Carpenter.

MOLLIE.

Are you sure?

HENRIETTA.

Certainly. I used to know his father in Washington.

MOLLIE.

Who was the girl he married?

HENRIETTA.

Is he married? I never said so. What makes you say he's married? You know something that you won't tell. You know him.

MOLLIE.

I tell you I never heard of Frederick Carpenter before in my life.

HENRIETTA.

What made you think he was married?

MOLLIE.

I don't know; I just thought so.

HENRIETTA.

It said in the paper that he was paying marked attention to a Miss Elsie M'Corkle, the daughter of Senator M'Corkle. Did you ever hear of her?

MOLLIE.

Let me see! (*Thinks.*) Yes, I've seen her name in the society columns.

HENRIETTA.

I have a clear case against him and it's worth every cent of ten thousand dollars.

MOLLIE.

In case you find the missing letters.

HENRIETTA.

Well, believe me, I'm going to find them. I think I'll go to the hotel down in the village and see if I can't locate the burglar.

Enter DIANA from R.

DIANA.

Mollie, uncle is here. I saw him from the window upstairs. You'd better warn Elsie. (*Exits C. D.*)

HENRIETTA.

Elsie? Who is Elsie?

MOLLIE.

She's Mr. Gilmore's wife. The manager, you know.

HENRIETTA.

Oh, really I thought she might have meant Elsie M'Corkle.

Enter DIANA and SENATOR M'CORKLE from C. D.

SENATOR M'CORKLE.

Where is she? I want to see her at once. Diana, didn't you say that she was here?

DIANA.

She's upstairs asleep. Now don't worry, uncle, she's all right.

SENATOR.

And where is the man? Just let me have a short talk with him, that's all.

HENRIETTA.

(At R. C.)

Do you mean Mr. Frederick Carpenter, sir?

SENATOR.

(At L. C.)

Is that his name, Diana?

DIANA.

(At L.)

Oh, no. His name is Teddy Gilmore.

HENRIETTA.

Excuse me. My mistake.

SENATOR.

(Loudly.)

Well, where is he? Where is he? I want to see him, d' y' hear? I want to see him!

DIANA.

He's not here.

SENATOR.

Not here! Has he run away and left her already?

MOLLIE.

(Behind desk.)

Oh, no. But I don't think you can see him just now. He's very busy.

SENATOR.

He won't be too busy to see me. Where is he, I say!

DIANA.

(*At window.*)

He's out on the tennis court. There he is, uncle.

SENATOR.

The fellow in white?

DIANA.

Yes.

SENATOR.

He's bigger than I thought he was, but I want a few words with him. Just let me see him face to face, that's all. (*Exit C. D.*)

MOLLIE.

(*To HENRIETTA.*)

Now you take the car and go right down to the village. I'll have Skeet take you. Do you want me to help you pack?

HENRIETTA.

No, thank you. But send Aunt Jubilee to me if you can spare her.

DIANA.

Mollie, I'm going up to Elsie's room. (*Exit R.*)

MOLLIE.

(*Crosses to L.*)

Aunt Jubilee! Jubilee!

AUNT J. *appears at door L.*

AUNT J.

Yas'm?

MOLLIE.

Miss Darby is leaving. She wants you to help her pack. I'll have the car brought out for you, Miss Darby. (*Exits L.*)

HENRIETTA.

She seems awfully anxious to have me go to the village. I can't understand it at all. She acts very suspicious.

AUNT J.

You don't think Miss Mollie stole your letters, do you?

HENRIETTA.

No, of course not.

AUNT J.

'Kase she didn't. I saw her on the floor and the burglum a-climbin' out'n dat winder.

HENRIETTA.

What did he look like, Auntie?

AUNT J.

Lawsy, 'deed an' I dunno. I jes' seed him run, dat's all. I dunno what he looked like 'kase jes' about dat time I frowed mah apron over mah head and went into de high-sterics. And I'm shore gwine to git me another situation. After what I seed las' night and what I yeerd dis mawnin', dis yere place am gittin' too spookatorious for me.

HENRIETTA.

This morning? What did you hear this morning?

AUNT J.

Ghostesses, dat's what I yeerd. Down in de basement under dat desk. Dey groan, aaah! jes' dat-away, and den dey go boom-boom, poundin' on d' trap-door, boom-boom! jes' dataway.

HENRIETTA.

Did you hear that this morning?

AUNT J.

Yas'm. Boom-boom! jes' dataway.

HENRIETTA.

Then someone is concealed in the basement.

AUNT J.

Dat's what I's tryin' to tell Miss Mollie, but she 'low dat I's mistaken.

HENRIETTA.

I understand it all! This girl Elsie is upstairs and Frederick Carpenter is hidden in the basement. He bribed Mollie to allow him to steal my letters. That's why she seemed so anxious to get rid of me. Jubilee, the burglar is hidden in the basement!

AUNT J.

Lawsy, lawsy! Is he? And all mah blackberry jam and watermillion pre-serbes down there!

Enter MOLLIE from L.

MOLLIE.

Are you ready?

HENRIETTA.

Ready?

MOLLIE.

To go to the village. The car is out in front waiting for you.

Enter SKEET from C. D.

SKEET.

Do you want me to drive her down, Miss Mollie?

HENRIETTA.

(At R.)

No, it won't be necessary. I've decided to stay here.

MOLLIE.

If you ever expect to recover your letters you'd better go and see a detective in the village.

HENRIETTA.

No. I have a better chance of recovering them right here in the hotel.

MOLLIE.

But I've rented your room.

HENRIETTA.

Rented it?

MOLLIE.

You gave it up, you know. I've put Mrs. Gilmore in there.

HENRIETTA.

Elsie?

MOLLIE.

Yes. You see I thought you were going to leave at once. You'll have to go now.

HENRIETTA.

Can't I have another room?

MOLLIE.

I'm sorry, but everything is taken.

HENRIETTA.

It looks as if you were trying to get rid of me.

MOLLIE.

(*Nervously.*)

Not at all. I only want to help you recover your property.

HENRIETTA.

I think I can do that by remaining right here.

MOLLIE.

But there isn't any room for you. Now listen, Miss Darby, and I'll tell you the truth. I didn't want to alarm you, but one of the guests is sick and I'm afraid it is something contagious. You had better go to the village at once.

HENRIETTA.

(*Down R.*)

Oh, I'm not afraid.

MOLLIE.

(*At C.*)

It might be the scarlet fever.

HENRIETTA.

I was vaccinated a month ago.

SKEET.

Where? (*Behind desk.*)

(*The ladies all look at him in astonishment. He bends over ledger and works furiously.*)

HENRIETTA.

In the doctor's office in San Francisco.

MOLLIE.

It's the yellow fever.

AUNT J.

(*At L., who has been bending forward listening with increasing terror, throws up her arms.*)

Yaller fever. Good-night! (*Sinks in chair at L.*)

Enter SENATOR from L.

SENATOR.

Young woman, send a nice little breakfast into the dining room and tell Elsie to come down. I'm just getting acquainted with my son-in-law and he's all right. (*Exit L.*)

MOLLIE.

All right. (*Turns to HENRIETTA.*) Now, really, I—

HENRIETTA.

(*Impatiently.*)

Oh, don't try to think up any more excuses. I'll go. I can get a room at the village. I'll pack up at once.

MOLLIE.

(*Pulls SKEET to C. D.*)

Skeet, run and get the car.

SKEET.

I got you. (*Exit C. D.*)

MOLLIE.

I'm awfully sorry. (*Goes to door L.*)

HENRIETTA.

Never mind. (*Exit MOLLIE at L.*)

AUNT J.

(*Comes tremblingly to HENRIETTA.*)

Lady, who is it dat's got de yaller fever and de smallpox an' all dem ailments?

HENRIETTA.

No one. She's just trying to get rid of me. Jubilee, are you sure you heard someone in the basement this morning?

AUNT J.

Yas'm. I shore did.

HENRIETTA.

Frederick Carpenter is in this house and Mollie is trying to conceal him.

AUNT J.

Is he a ha'nt-er jes' a plain burglum?

HENRIETTA.

He's a villain, Jubilee. He's the man I'm going to sue for breach of promise. I'm sure he's in this house. Come up to my room and help me pack. I'm going to notify the police at once. (*Exit R.*)

AUNT J.

Lawsy, lawsy, here I's gittin' mixed up wif burglums and ha'nts and Lawd knows what, and me a 'spectable member of de Afro-American Mefodist Church. Scan'lous, perfectly scan'lous. (*Exit R. muttering.*)

Enter JIM from C. D. disguised as the old man. He crosses down to table L. C., takes pack of cards from pocket and begins to play solitaire. Enter

SKEET *from C. D.* He comes down to JIM and watches him.

JIM.

(*Looks up at SKEET.*)

Fine mornin', ain't it?

SKEET.

Sure. I'm goin' down to the village. Want a ride?

JIM.

(*With his hand behind his ear.*)

Hey?

SKEET.

(*Loudly.*)

Want to take a ride? A ride!

JIM.

Inside? Inside what?

SKEET.

(*Yells.*)

I said did you want to take a ride?

JIM.

Nope. I gotta a bad case of rheumatism, I have, and I cal'late I'll set 'round the house a spell today.

Wanter play keerds?

SKEET.

Naw, I ain't got time.

JIM.

I like a good game o' solitary myself, ef folks 'ud only quit pesterin' me.

Enter MOLLIE from L.

MOLLIE.

Where's the lady from Honolulu?

SKEET.

I don't know.

MOLLIE.

Ted won't come up until she's gone and Mr. Ryker won't come back until she's gone, and if I

don't get her out of the house soon I'll die of heart failure.

HENRIETTA.
(*Outside at R.*)

Mollie!

SKEET.

There she is now.

HENRIETTA.
(*Outside.*)

Is the car ready?

MOLLIE.

Yes, Skeet is waiting. (*Goes to R.*)

Enter from R. AUNT J., dressed in an auto coat, cap and veil and carrying a grip. Note: The audience must think she is HENRIETTA. SKEET rushes to her and takes her grip. MOLLIE stands between AUNT J. and the audience.

SKEET.

The car's all ready. Lemme take your grip. You gotta hurry. (*Takes her arms and leads her to C. D.*) 'Cause I got my engine all started and the car is liable to run down hill if we leave it standing. (*SKEET hurries her off C. D.*)

HENRIETTA.
(*Off stage, behind C. D.*)

Good-bye, Mollie.

MOLLIE.
(*At C. D.*)

Good-bye and good luck. (*Comes down to JIM, who is playing solitaire.*) Well, thank goodness, she's out of the house at last.

JIM.
(*Looks up.*)

Hey?

MOLLIE.

Oh, it's you, is it? You'd better go upstairs.

JIM.

Hey?

MOLLIE.

(Loudly.)

You'd better go upstairs. We've got to clean up in here. Clean up!

JIM.

Clean up? You think you kin clean me up playin' keerds? Come on and try it.

MOLLIE.

(Throws up her hands in despair.)

Oh, what's the use? *(Gets dinner bell from desk.)*
Say, if you want anything just ring this bell.

JIM.

Hey?

MOLLIE.

(Screams.)

Bell, bell, bell!

JIM.

(Shocked.)

What kinder language is that? Shame on you!

MOLLIE.

If you need anything ring this bell. *(Gives it to him.)*

JIM.

(Puts it on table.)

All right. I'd jest like to play a game of solitary, if folks wouldn't keep pesterin' me. *(Plays cards.)*

MOLLIE.

(Back of desk.)

Come up, now. She's gone.

TED *ascends.*

TED.

Who's gone?

MOLLIE.

The lady from Honolulu. She's gone to the village to try and find a clue to her missing letters.

TED.

Where's my wife?

MOLLIE.

I'll send her to you. You needn't hide any longer. Stone's out looking for the lawyer and you're the boss now.

TED.

Boss of what?

MOLLIE.

This Inn. (*JIM listens, unobserved.*)

TED.

I don't know what you're talking about. I don't want to buy the Inn.

MOLLIE.

You don't have to buy it; it's yours for nothing.

TED.

But I don't want it; all I want is my wife.

MOLLIE.

I'd better send Jubilee in here to watch the front door in case Doctor Stone or Miss Darby comes back. (*Goes to door L.*) Jubilee!

AUNT J.

(*Off L.*)

Yas'm? You want me, Miss Mollie?

MOLLIE.

Yes. Come in here.

Enter HENRIETTA from L., dressed like AUNT J. MOLLIE leads her to C. D. TED places a chair for her and she sits with her back to the audience. Note: The audience must think she is really AUNT J.

MOLLIE.

Hurry up and sit down here. Keep your eye on the road and if you see anybody coming, just call. (*Crosses to L.*) I'll send your wife right down. (*Exit L.*)

TED.

(*Comes down to JIM.*)

Say, you'd better go to your room.

JIM.

Hey?

TED.

Get out! My wife is coming. You'd better beat it. (*Loudly.*) Beat it!

JIM.

Eat what? I don't see nothin' to eat.

TED.

(*Takes his arm.*)

Come on upstairs.

JIM.

Wanter have a game of keards?

TED.

No!

JIM.

I heerd ye. All right. I'll keep on playin' solitary and I wish folks 'ud quit pesterin' me. (*Plays solitaire.*)

Enter ELSIE from L.

ELSIE.

Ted! (*Rushes to him.*)

TED.

Elsie! (*Embraces her.*)

ELSIE.

Where have you been?

TED.

In the basement.

ELSIE.

Let us get our things and leave this horrid place at once.

TED.

In a minute. Say, you don't look well, darling.

ELSIE.

Well? I'm a nervous wreck. Ever since I drank

those lemonades last night I've been feeling wobbly. Oh, I wish we'd never come to this Inn. Diana telegraphed to papa and he's here now.

TED.

Here? Where?

ELSIE.

I don't know.

TED.

Get your hat and we'll leave at once. I don't want to meet papa.

ELSIE.

(Sobs on his shoulder.)

Oh, Teddy, I'm so m-m-miserable.

TED.

(Consoling her.)

There, there, we'll go at once. Poor little girl.

Enter SENATOR from L.

SENATOR.

What's this? Elsie!

ELSIE.

(At C.)

It's papa.

SENATOR.

(Thunders.)

Who is that man? Release my daughter!

ELSIE.

I don't want to be released. This is my husband.

SENATOR.

(At L., astounded.)

What!

ELSIE.

(Faces him defiantly.)

I said that this is my husband.

SENATOR.

How many husbands have you got? I just left your husband in there. *(Points to L.)*

ELSIE.

(*Bewildered.*)

In there? (*Points to L.*)

SENATOR.

That's what I said. And now I find you in the embrace of this young scoundrel.

TED.

(*Comes between them, faces SENATOR.*)

Sir!

SENATOR.

Don't you try to bluff me. How dare you embrace another man's wife?

TED.

(*With his face close to the SENATOR's.*)

She's my wife!

SENATOR.

She is not. Her husband is in the dining room!

TED.

Elsie, what does he mean?

ELSIE.

I don't know.

SENATOR.

(*Grabs TED.*)

I'll show him to you. Come in there and face him and if he don't thrash you, I will! (*Drags TED to L., ELSIE puts her arms around TED's waist and tries to drag him to R.*)

ELSIE.

You let him alone! You shan't harm him. He's the only husband I ever had. (*They push SENATOR off L. and lock the door.*)

SENATOR.

(*Bangs on door L.*)

Let me in! Elsie, let me in!

TED.

(*At C., turns to* ELSIE.)

Now I want an explanation. What does he mean about another husband?

ELSIE.

I can't imagine.

TED.

(*Tenderly.*)

There isn't anyone else, is there, Elsie?

ELSIE.

Of course not. I never wanted anyone else but you.

TED.

Darling! (*Embraces her.*)

ELSIE.

And you never loved anyone else but me, did you, Ted? (*Pause.*) Did you?

TED.

Never.

HENRIETTA.

(*Seated with her back to the audience.*)

Tell her the truth.

TED.

(*Startled.*)

What was that?

HENRIETTA.

I said tell her the truth.

TED.

(*Goes to* HENRIETTA.)

I am telling her the truth.

ELSIE.

What does she mean? (*Goes to* HENRIETTA.)
Speak, woman, and tell me what you know.

HENRIETTA.

Ask him to tell you about Henrietta Darby of Honolulu.

TED.

(Grabs her arms and swings her around, showing the audience that it is HENRIETTA.)

Who are you?

HENRIETTA.

(Throwing off dusting-cap.)

Who am I? I am the woman you deserted in Hawaii, the woman you deceived, the woman who's going to sue you for ten thousand dollars, Henrietta Darby!

ELSIE.

Ted, is this true?

HENRIETTA.

He can't deny it. I have the proofs.

ELSIE.

(Totters to chair L., sinks in it and sobs.)

Oh, Ted!

TED.

(Rushes to her and takes her hand.)

I tell you it's all a mistake.

ELSIE.

(Pushing him away.)

It's not. It's the truth.

TED.

Elsie!

ELSIE.

Don't speak to me, don't look at me. Go away. I never want to see your face again.

TED.

Henrietta! *(Goes toward her.)*

HENRIETTA.

Back, viper! How dare you speak to me?

TED.

I'll admit I was in the wrong.

HENRIETTA.

You'll admit more than that when you are in the

hands of the police. Villain, deceiver, heart-breaker!
(*Walks up and down stage at R., wringing her hands.*)

ELSIE.

Oh, Ted! (*Sobs loudly.*)

SENATOR.

(*Bangs at door L.*)

Let me in! Let me in!

HENRIETTA.

(*Comes close to TED suddenly and grabs him.*)

Give me my letters!

TED.

I haven't got them.

HENRIETTA.

(*Jerks him around.*)

You have! You stole them from the safe last night!

ELSIE.

Oh, Ted! (*Sobs wildly.*)

HENRIETTA.

Robber, burglar, assassin, give me my letters!
(*They struggle, she pushes him from her and he falls against JIM's table. JIM for the first time looks up from his game. He is frightened and rings the bell violently. HENRIETTA goes to door at R.*)
I'll see the police. (*TED pushes her out R. and locks door after her.*)

SENATOR.

(*Banging at door L.*)

You'll let me in or I'll get the police.

ELSIE.

And you said I was the only girl you ever loved.
(*Sobs wildly.*)

TED.

(*Goes to ELSIE, kneels, takes her hand.*)

There, there! (*Tries to calm her, she sobs and acts hysterical.*)

JIM.

(*Ringing the bell.*)

Help, help, police!

(*TED rushes to him and grabs the bell. As soon as TED leaves ELSIE she screams. HENRIETTA bangs at door R., SENATOR at door L.*)

JIM.

Don't you hit me! (*Raises chair to protect himself.*)

TED.

(*Drops bell, tears his hair.*)

Oh, what a lovely honeymoon.

Enter SKEET from C. D., followed by AUNT J.

SKEET.

I took her down to the village and found out it was the cook.

TED.

Quick, get some water. My wife's fainted.

TED unlocks door at L. SENATOR and MAN enter at L.

SENATOR.

(*At L.*)

Elsie!

ELSIE.

(*Rushes to his arms.*)

Take me away, take me away. He's in love with another woman. (*Sobs on her father's shoulder.*)

SENATOR.

There, there, go to your husband. (*Passes her to MAN.*)

MAN.

(*Tries to soothe her.*)

There, there!

ELSIE.

Let me alone. You're not my husband. I don't know you from Adam.

MAN.

You don't? Well, I'm dressed different.

SENATOR.

Are you or are you not my son-in-law?

MAN.

There's been a mistake somewhere, Senator. There stands your son-in-law. (*Points to TED.*)

ELSIE.

That's what I said all along.

SENATOR.

(*Goes to TED.*)

May I ask your name?

TED.

Certainly, papa. My name is Frederick Carpenter.

SENATOR.

Not the son of F. X. Carpenter of Washington?

TED.

Yes, sir. Do you know him?

SENATOR.

(*Shakes hands with TED.*)

Know him? I should say I do. I'd rather have you for a son-in-law than twenty men like Lord Vaughan.

So would I.

ELSIE.

Enter HENRIETTA from C. D.

HENRIETTA.

I'm going to the village. Where is Mollie?

SKEET.

I'll find her. (*Exit L.*)

AUNT J.

(*At rear C.*)

Does you want me to take off all dis yere automobile fixin'?

HENRIETTA.

No, you may keep them.

AUNT J.

(*Goes to L.*)

Lawsy, I ain't had so much excitement since 'Man-cipation Day. Dey all thought I was a white lady and I rode in de two-by-four tin-lizzie jes' as if I owned her. (*Exit L., proudly.*)

HENRIETTA.

I'm going for a policeman.

ELSIE.

Oh, papa, she's going to arrest Frederick.

SENATOR.

What for?

HENRIETTA.

For breach of promise. First he stole my affections and then he stole my letters. I'll have the law on you if it's my last act. (*Exit C. D.*)

ELSIE.

Ted thought he was in love with her, papa—

TED.

But that was long before I met you.

SENATOR.

And did you propose to her?

TED.

I'm afraid I did. In a letter.

SENATOR.

And she has that letter?

TED.

She did have it with several others. But they've been stolen.

SENATOR.

Then she can do nothing until she recovers her evidence.

Enter MOLLIE from L., followed by DIANA.

MOLLIE.

Where is Miss Darby?

SENATOR.

(At C.)

She's gone. Do you know anything about those missing letters? *(Goes up R. to TED and ELSIE.)*

MOLLIE.

No, sir. I only know a burglar took them last night.

TED.

I'd give five hundred dollars for them.

JIM.

Hey?

TED.

(Near JIM.)

I said I'd give five hundred dollars for the letters that were stolen last night.

JIM.

(Produces jewel casket from pocket.)

Ye did? There's the letters! *(TED takes box, removes the letters and examines them.)*

ELSIE.

Let me see! *(Goes to him.)*

SENATOR.

Just a moment. Elsie, probably it would be just as well for you not to see them.

TED.

That's what I think, too. *(To JIM.)* I'll give you a check for five hundred dollars at once.

JIM.

Ye needn't to mind. Jest gimme one of the letters and we'll call it square.

TED.

Why do you want one of them?

JIM.

Jest a little personal matter.

TED.

(Hands him one.)

There you are.

JIM.

Much obliged. *(Puts it in his pocket.)* Now I'd like to finish my little game of solitary, if you folks 'ud quit pesterin' me. *(Plays solitaire.)*

Enter DOCTOR from C. D.

ELSIE.

Teddy, I believe you've been more sinned against than sinning. I forgive you!

DOCTOR.

(Comes down C.)

Teddy! Is that Teddy?

ELSIE.

That's what I call him.

MOLLIE.

(At L.)

Yes, that is Teddy. What have you got to say about it?

DOCTOR.

(At C.)

I say it's a bunco game and you're all a bunch of swindlers. Your Ted evidently didn't arrive in time and so you tried to pass off this man as a substitute. *(Points to MAN, who is up L.)*

MAN.

(Coming down to L. of DOCTOR.)

Tried? I think she succeeded.

DOCTOR.

But what good did it do? The lawyer has disappeared and you failed to sign the papers last night.

MAN.

Oh, no I didn't. I signed them all right.

DOCTOR.

Impossible. Where did you get them?

MAN.

Mr. Ryker and I had a nice long chat last night in his room. I signed the papers and took charge of the Inn. If you don't believe it, ask my friend here. (*Points to JIM.*)

JIM.

(*Looks up from game, his hand behind ear.*)

Hey?

(*SENATOR, TED and ELSIE, up R., look on with much interest.*)

MAN.

(*Loudly.*)

They want to know if I signed the papers last night.

JIM.

(*Emphatically.*)

Yep. He signed the papers. 'Cause I seen him when he done it.

DOCTOR.

(*Crosses to JIM's table, leans over it.*)

And who are you?

JIM.

(*Looks up at him.*)

Hey?

DOCTOR.

(*Loudly.*)

I said what is your name?

JIM.

(*Rises, faces DOCTOR.*)

My name is Jim Ryker. (*Throws off wig.*)

MOLLIE AND DOCTOR.

Mr. Ryker!

JIM.

Hey?

MOLLIE.

(*Down L.*)

But why—(*pause*)—I thought you—(*pause*).
What did you dress up like that for?

JIM.

In order to be here on time and yet not be recognized by my wife.

MOLLIE.

Your wife?

JIM.

The lady from Honolulu. She's my widow.

TED.

You hear, Elsie. She's *his* widow. (*To JIM.*)
But she thinks you were drowned.

JIM.

She'll change her mind this afternoon when she learns that I have started suit for a divorce. And your letters are the evidence.

TED.

Then it was you who stole the letters?

JIM.

Sure. I guess I have a perfect right to read my widow's love letters.

DOCTOR.

(*At L. C., turns to MAN, who is now C.*)

You say you signed those papers last night?

MAN.

I did.

DOCTOR.

Then you are a forger. You had no right to sign them at all. They should have been signed by Ted Gilmore.

JIM.

Hey?

DOCTOR.

They should have been signed by Ted Gilmore.

JIM.

(*At L. C.*)

They were signed by Ted Gilmore. (*Points to MAN.*) He's Ted Gilmore!

DOCTOR.

You're dreaming. (*Points to TED.*) There stands Ted Gilmore.

TED.

Oh, no. My name is Frederick Carpenter.

ELSIE.

And I just call him Ted for short.

JIM.

I've known Ted Gilmore for the past ten years and I'll take oath that that is the man. (*Points to MAN.*)

MOLLIE.

I don't understand.

MAN.

(*At C.*)

It's the truth. I am the real Ted Gilmore.

MOLLIE.

You are? Then why did you—(*pauses*).

MAN.

Just a little romantic adventure. I accepted a job up here just to be near the old place and look over the ground. Yesterday I met a young lady who wanted to meet a hero, so I decided to give her a chance. That's all.

DIANA.

(*Down L. with MOLLIE.*)

Then you are not the hero of the tunnel! Another deception.

Enter SKEET from L.

SKEET.

Oh, yes he is. He's the man who pulled me out of the tunnel.

MOLLIE.

And he's the man who pulled me out of the hole.

JIM.

And he's the man who signed the papers. (*To Doctor.*) And that let's you out.

SKEET.

(*Goes to Doctor.*)

Your room's taken by another party. So you're checked out. (*Hands him his hat.*) There's your hat, so what's your hurry. (*Escorts him to the door.*) Come around sometime next week and see what becomes of your Sanitarium. (*Pushes him out C. D.*) Good morning! JIM.

I think I'll go and clean up. (*Crosses to R.*) I think every little detail has been attended to and things are straightened up at last. (*Exit R.*)

MAN.

(*Goes to Diana.*)

Can you ever forgive me?

DIANA.

And you're not Elsie's husband?

MAN.

I'm not anybody's husband (*pauses, looks at her significantly*) yet. DIANA.

Well, if my friends Mollie and Skeet can vouch for you, I think (*pauses*).

MAN.

Yes?

DIANA.

(*Runs up to C. D.*)

I'll meet you on the tennis court. (*Runs out C. D.*)

MAN.

(*Follows her.*)

And I'll be right there. Believe me! (*Exit C. D.*)

TED.

I wonder if I can get anything to eat.

SENATOR.

There's a lunch all ready in the dining room. I ordered it for Elsie's other husband. Come on.
(*Exits L.*)

TED.

Hungry, Elsie?

ELSIE.

Awfully. I haven't had anything to eat since I've been married. But I'm just as happy as I can be.
(*They go out at L.*)

MOLLIE.

Well, it's all coming out right in spite of everything.

SKEET.

Sure it is. And there ain't another girl in the whole State of New York who could have put the thing through like you did. Say, Mollie—

MOLLIE.

Hum? (*With closed lips.*)

SKEET.

I dunno if I can say it er not. (*Clears throat.*)
Ahem! My throat is so dry I can hardly whistle.

MOLLIE.

Don't whistle. Just say what you started out to say.

SKEET.

Do y' mean it? Say, Mollie, d' you think y' could learn to love me without straining yourself too much? (*She starts to speak.*) Wait a minute! Don't answer yet, I ain't strong enough to bear it. I never talked like this to a girl before. Mollie, I ain't got much salted away in the bank. Only three hundred, that's all. Do you think you could? You know what I mean?

MOLLIE.

Yes, Skeet, I know what you mean and I think I could.

SKEET.

Honest! (*Starts to embrace her.*)

Enter Miss L. from R.

MISS L.

Why, Mollie—Skeet, I'm astonished.

MOLLIE.

So am I. I never was so astonished in my life.

MISS L.

You should never kiss a young lady like that. Kiss her hand.

SKEET.

Her hand? I jes' as soon kiss a punkin.

MISS L.

The idea!

MOLLIE.

Is it against the law?

MISS L.

No, I suppose not.

SKEET.

Then put your shawl over your eyes and what you don't see won't hurt you.

MISS L.

The idea! (*Flounces out at R.*)

SKEET.

She meant that kissing is liable to carry germs. Do you think you can catch things by kissing, Mollie?

MOLLIE.

Maybe. I might have caught a millionaire.

SKEET.

What 'ud you say if I'd kiss your hand?

MOLLIE.

I don't know. (*Pauses.*) I think I'll tell you to be more ambitious.

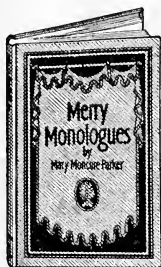
SKEET.

Mollie! (*Embraces her as curtain falls.*)

CURTAIN.

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